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THESIS

GUERRILLA VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA: EXAMINING
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

by
Juan F. Roman

June, 1994

Principal Advisor:

Roger Evered

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**GUERRILLA VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA: EXAMINING CAUSES AND
CONSEQUENCES**

by

Juan F. Roman
Lieutenant, Colombian Navy
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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the


NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

Colombia's history is replete with acts of political violence. Guerrilla violence has been of major historical significance in the country, where guerrilla groups have operated without interruption since the mid-1940s. This thesis investigates the causes and consequences of guerrilla violence in Colombia. The research begins with an examination of the country's political history, in which the constant oscillation between two traditional parties and their ideologies has often resulted in violent conflict. There is also a discussion of the various stakeholders in guerrilla violence; from the guerrilla groups and political parties, to the Catholic Church, to various economic and social groups, each has had its own motivations and methods in reacting to and/or encouraging the phenomenon of violence for political ends. Due to the recent shift of focus by some guerrilla elements from political to economic objectives, an analysis of the economic causes and consequences of guerrilla violence is also undertaken. Finally, there is a review of the constitutional reform process that has led to an opportunity for the country to resolve political issues through non-violent means.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Pedro Antonio Marin Marin was born on May 12, 1928. The member of a Liberal Party peasant family in the area of *Quindio*, he lived the violent period of the late 1940s as an adolescent. By 1949, the Liberal group to which he belonged had joined forces with communist guerrillas, and he had adopted the name of Manuel Marulanda Velez, known as *Tirofijo* ("Sure-Shot") to his comrades. By the 1960s he had become the nation-wide leader of one of the largest and long-lived guerrilla movements in Latin American history.

His life in many ways parallels that of modern Colombia. A nation that has dealt with political violence continuously since the late 1940s, Colombia has only recently been able to consider the possibility of a generation that has not been exposed to the level and scope of brutality that so often characterizes political violence.

The history of political violence in Colombia has a cast of many stakeholders, among them the politician, the guerrilla, the partisan, the soldier, the church, the worker, the peasant, the industrialist, the activist, and the bandit. General violence is today still present in everyday Colombian life. Kidnappings, extortion, and murder have all reached a terrible magnitude, and placed present-day Colombia among the most violent nations of the world. It is in part because of the population's firm desire to reduce overall violence in

Colombian society that political violence has become a target of government and institutional efforts.

In 1991, the Colombian people adopted a new constitution. One of the principle motivations of the new constitutions supporters was the desire to put a permanent end to the political violence that had characterized so much of the nation's history. In 1994, the national dialog and reconciliation that began, and was subsequently stimulated by constitutional reform, has reached a point where it is possible to objectively review its history; the causes and consequences of guerrilla violence can be examined in a less passionate way. This constitutional reform takes place in a world arena that is marked by both the fall of communism and a trend toward economic modernization. This is of special significance in Latin America, long known for its economic problems and insurgent movements.

The purpose of this research is to examine the history of political violence in Colombia from the varying perspectives of its stakeholders to derive an understanding of how the dialog and reconciliation has come to take place. An additional goal is to define view of the economic considerations at work in this process. The research and analysis that is performed are used to inform the conclusions and recommendations that will be offered in the final chapter regarding the past and future of political violence in Colombia. The principal research question of the current work is, therefore: What are the causes and consequences of guerrilla violence in Colombia?

Chapter II is a brief survey of the political life of Colombia from the War of a Thousand Days at the turn of the century to the post-National Front period, which continues to the present. The chapter is meant to highlight key events that were marked by, or intimately involved with, political violence. The chapter necessarily includes reference to the various leaders that have been influential in Colombian history, but there is no exhaustive profile of any individual or regime.

Chapter III is concerned with identifying the stakeholders in political violence. The various guerrilla groups that have been prominent in Colombian political violence are briefly profiled. The identification of stakeholders continues with discussion of the traditional political parties and their internal factions, the military, industry, the Catholic Church, labor, the rural population, various civic movements, and bandits and narcotics traffickers. The purpose of the discussion is not to clarify responsibility for one action or another, but rather to view political violence, or the guerrillas who perpetrate it, from the perspective of each stakeholder. This will allow the reader to gain an understanding of each stakeholder's influence in bringing about the period of national dialog and reconciliation, and will provide dimension to the theoretical and economic discussion of Chapter IV.

Chapter IV presents an economic perspective on political violence in Colombia. The chapter opens with a discussion of theoretical political competition. Subsequent sections relate current indicators of the economy, examine the finance methods of guerrilla groups, and estimate the economic consequences of political violence.

Chapter V discusses the period of national dialog and reconciliation that has emerged in the early 1990s. The efforts at reform that lie within the Constitution of 1991 are mentioned, as are ongoing military, political, and economic policies.

Chapter VI presents conclusions about the causes and consequences of guerrilla violence in Colombia, which are informed by the research described in the previous chapters. Additionally, recommendations are offered as to how the momentum of dialog and national reconciliation can be maintained.

II. THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

To understand the origins of violence in Colombia, it is necessary to review the political events and trends that mark the history of the country. This is because, since independence in 1819, the search for political order has been an obsession in Colombia. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the central state was still fragile. The unification of the national market, and even the political system, was far from being a reality. None of the urban poles were imposing a true supremacy. The larger financial and commercial elites, although progressing in modernization, could not avoid conflict with local elites, who, because of the recent rise of an export economy, had time to ensure political power through a monopoly of the land. The system was so complex that, to many, political renewal seemed to be possible only through violent means.

Elite members of the Liberal Party (LP) and the Conservative Party (CP),¹ alternately competed and cooperated with each other throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Often the nature of relations between the two parties depended on whether moderates or extremists dominated the ruling party. During periods when moderate factions of both parties were in power, the parties were able to work together in coalitions; when extremists factions prevailed, however, conflict often resulted. During competitive periods, one party usually sought to limit or eliminate the rival party's

¹ The traditional Colombian parties, that even today receive more than 80% of the electoral vote.

participation in the political process, and these attempts often resulted in political violence.

In the early 1860s, after a civil war, the Liberals emerged victorious, and held power until 1884. A Constitution was enacted in 1863, but parties continued to engage in local conflicts. In 1884, the Conservative Rafael Nuñez was elected President, resulting in a dramatic reversal of prior government policies. In 1886 a new constitution was adopted, which remained in force until 1991. This constitution had a defined purpose of integrating Colombia under a centralized political authority, representing a victory for the Conservative leadership, as well as traditionalists and Catholics.

The last civil war, the War of the Thousand Days (1899-1902), took more than 100,000 lives, ruined the capacity for production, and allowed the separation of Panama by focusing the government on internal, rather than external, considerations.² At the end of this conflict, the elite inaugurated a Period of Reconciliation (1903-30), catalyzed by Rafael Reyes' presidency. The replacement of discredited extremist factions with a more conciliatory moderate faction made it possible for the two parties to share power and achieve a consensus on what policies were appropriate for Colombian society.

Liberal merchants and Conservative agriculturists found a common interest in coffee exports, which were quickly beginning to dominate the Colombian economy. Their mutual economic interests allowed the moderate factions of each party to join in a bipartisan coalition that gained political control at the end of the civil war. Although the

² Sturges, Karen, "Historical Setting of Colombia", in *Colombia: A Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 28.

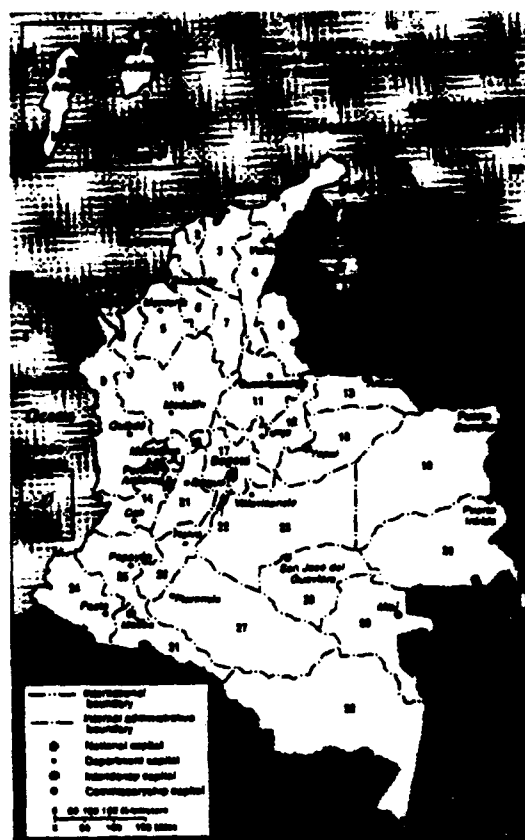
Conservatives retained nominal control of political institutions until 1930, they accepted and applied the principle of minority representation and participation in government. Conservative presidents appointed Liberals to their bipartisan cabinets, thus including them in political decision making. Although party conflict and rural unrest remained, the coalitions that the two parties formed provided a basis for political stability.

In the early 1900s, the industrial sector became an increasingly important part of the economy. Between 1900 and 1910, textile industries developed in Antioquia, pottery plants in Caldas, and breweries in Cundinamarca and Antioquia (See Figure 1). During the 1910s and 1920s, the Colombian economy became more integrated in the global financial and commercial markets. The United States replaced Britain as Colombia's key financial and commercial partner. Most of the foreign exchange came from the coffee trade, which at this time represented nearly 80 percent of exports. By 1929, private foreign investment totaled US \$400 million, with some US \$45 million having been invested by oil companies.³

The growth in industry and construction led to the emergence of a genuine working class that soon learned to unionize. In 1918 Colombia experienced its first major strike, on the Atlantic coast. North American investments were affected by strikes in 1924 and 1927 in the Tropical Oil Company, and in 1928 a strike against the United Fruit Company was violently put down by the Armed Forces. There was also tension in the rural areas, especially where the big coffee "haciendas" were located. Growing popular

³ Sturges, Karen, "Historical Setting of Colombia", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 31.

discontent with Conservative governments, and divisions within Conservative ranks, eventually resulted in the rise of the Liberal Party to power.



Amazonas	32 Chocó	9 Norte de Santander	8
Antioquia	10 Córdoba	5 Putumayo	31
Arauca	13 Cundinamarca	17 Quindío	20
Atlántico	2 Distrito Especial	22 Risaralda	15
Bolívar	7 Guainía	29 Santandor	11
Boyacá	12 Guaviare	28 Sucre	6
Caldas	16 Huila	26 Telima	21
Caquetá	27 La Guajira	1 Valle del Cauca	14
Casanare	18 Magdalena	3 Vaupés	30
Cauca	25 Meta	23 Vichada	19
César	4 Naríño	24	

Figure 1. Map of Colombia Showing Departments.

The Liberals, recognizing the social changes that were under way, identified themselves with the growing demands of the masses. After fifty years of Conservative rule, the Liberals gained the upper hand in the political arena and retained it during fifteen years (1930-45) of global crisis.

A. THE REFORMIST PERIOD (1930-1938)

As a result of the Liberal victory in 1930, many of the privileges that had been afforded to Conservatives through patronage politics were now denied. Because the President appointed the governors, who in turn appointed the municipal mayors, the transfer of power from the CP to the LP at the presidential level was felt at the municipal level. Because of the change in the political affiliation of the police force, the stricter application of the law was transferred to members of the opposition party. Clashes resulted between partisan groups among the lower classes, who sought either to gain or to maintain their privileges.

The first Liberal president of the twentieth century, Enrique Olaya Herrera (1930-34), was a member of a prestigious family, and former ambassador to the United States, where he established close relations with business organizations. His election coincided with a drop in the price of coffee to about one-third of its 1928 price. Loans from United States banks stopped, and international reserves dropped from US \$73 Million in 1929 to US \$17 million at the end of 1931.⁴ The country along with most of

⁴ Pécaut, Daniel, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930-1954*, Siglo veintiuno Editores, 1987, p. 127.

the world, was gripped by an economic depression. Olaya succeeded in carrying out some reforms, especially in education. Nonetheless, some Liberals, disappointed by their party's failure to carry out a "revolution," created in 1932 a movement called the Revolutionary Leftist National Union (Unión Nacional Izquierdista Revolucionario--UNIR). The movement came to an end after Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, its leader, returned to the LP in 1935 after the party adopted many of his proposed reforms and offered him a congressional seat.

In 1934 Alfonso López Pumarejo became elected as Olaya's successor to the presidency. López Pumarejo was born in an oligarchic finance family founded at the end of the 19th century. With the slogan "Revolution on the March", López announced the end of the oligarchic era and the arrival of a modern bourgeois society with links between the people and the State. Believing that the reformist faction of the LP had become strong enough to carry out its program, the López Pumarejo administration implemented extensive reforms, principally in agriculture, education and the system of taxation. These reforms included constitutional amendments that guaranteed the state's role in developing the economy of the country and diversifying its exports, authorized the national government to expropriate property for the common good, provided special state protection for labor and the right for labor unions to strike, and stipulated that public assistance was a function of the state. Additional reforms included the strict enforcement of progressive income and inheritance taxes, the guarantee of rights granted to squatters

on public and private lands, the reinforcement of credit institutions, and the renewed separation of church and state.⁵

The reforms put in place by the López Pumarejo administration, combined with import substitution policies, helped to accelerate the capitalist development of Colombia. During this administration, coffee prices and the volume of exports increased. A surge in industrialization began in 1930s, aided by various external and internal factors. The key external factor was the world economic crisis of the 1930s, which limited the availability of goods to be imported and limited market for exports. Internal factors included domestic capital accumulation; increased buying power of large groups, especially coffee growers; the construction of communication and transportation facilities that unified the internal market; and a continuation of protectionist policies begun by President Reyes in 1904. The increasing emphasis on growing and exporting coffee fostered industrial development and allowed a more equitable distribution of income because more skilled laborers were employed and received higher wages.

Once the illusions of the "Revolution in March" dissipated, the people realized that there was little advance in reform. The resistance of the elites, separation within the Liberal Party, the revival of the Conservative fundamentalism, and the weakness of the public popular sectors are all in part responsible for this deterioration. However, Liberal reform had contributed to the legitimization of democratic politics. In contrast, the

⁵ Sturges, Karen, "Historical Setting of Colombia", in *Colombia: A Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 33.

Conservatives favored a minimum of reform, the greatest possible influence of the church, and continued control of the country by a small upper class.

B. STATE REGULATIONS AND SOCIAL DEREGULATION (1938-1945)

In 1938, disagreement over the extent to which Liberal ideology should be applied led to a split between the pro-reform supporters of López Pumarejo and the pro-status-quo followers of fellow Liberal Eduardo Santos, owner of the national daily "El Tiempo". In that year, Santos became president with the support of moderate Liberals and Conservatives opposed to López Pumarejo's Revolution on the March.

Santos's victory was certainly the continuation of the "Liberal Republic"; but also meant rupturing López's social agreement. This was not a renunciation of interventionist ideology, but rather an imposition of social discipline on popular organizations that had lost their identification with the regimen; it was a situation in which the state took priority over the social classes.

Santos retained some of his predecessor's policies, such as protectionism, and oriented his administration toward capitalist industrial and agricultural development. The Santos administration improved the economic capability of the country to invest in industry. It also stimulated capital intensive agriculture to convert traditional *latifundios* (large land-holdings), which relied on cheap labor, into capitalist *haciendas*, which used advanced technology. The reduced demand for manual labor in the countryside caused many *campesinos* (country worker) to migrate to the cities. His administration also

strengthened economic, commercial, and cultural relations with the United States. During World War II, he cooperated with the United States in the defense of the Panama Canal, and broke relations with the Axis governments.⁶

Despite opposition from Conservatives, moderate Liberals, and a more progressive Liberal group led by Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, López Pumarejo was elected to a second term in 1942. Paradoxically, Alfonso López Pumarejo became the man with the responsibility of dismantling the interventionist apparatus and formalizing the political connection to a more liberal development model. In his first term, that interventionism helped the interests of industrialists; but in the second term, the same industrialists contended that those social reforms and policies were no longer appropriate, and resisted new reforms. This is why he was not as successful in his second term in implementing reform. The Conservative Laureano Gómez exploited the Liberal division by attacking López Pumarejo's foreign policy, including the declaration of war on the Axis powers in 1943. Other effects of War World II were being felt at that time, including an unbalanced budget, unstable foreign trade, a decline in coffee prices, and an increase in import prices.

Discontent with López increased. In 1944, Laureano Gómez made personal attacks on López that were so inflammatory that Gómez was imprisoned. This triggered demonstrations and street fighting in Bogotá. López provisionally abandoned the presidency in favor of his substitute Darío Echandía from September 1943 to May 1944. In July 1944, during army maneuvers, López Pumarejo and some of his cabinet members

⁶ Sturges, Karen, "Historical Setting of Colombia", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 35.

were held prisoner for a few days by officers staging an abortive military coup in Pasto. Although most of the military supported constitutional order, López Pumarejo lost prestige and power. In July 1945, he resigned in favor of his first presidential designate, Alberto Lleras Camargo, a Liberal who had distinguish himself as a writer and government official.

Lleras Camargo, who served as provisional president until August 1946, appointed representatives of all parties to his cabinet in an effort to establish a "national union." Nonetheless, his coalition policy was attacked by Gaitán, who had gained considerable support among the masses and among some intellectuals and industrialists.

When World War II was finished, the social elites were ready to take on the Liberal model of development. However, there was a difficulty: the state was too weak to face the "social problem." The misery of the rural masses, their progressive displacement to the cities, and the inability of industry to assimilate them, were problems that worried the socio-economic elite about the future of the social order. Two contradictory formulations appeared: The first, from Laureano Gómez, placed the division of the society in a political frame. The second, from Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was located in the social frame, and considered that the state should no longer be a source of support for the masses.⁷

⁷ Pécaut, Daniel, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930-1954*, Siglo veintiuno Editores, 1987, p. 353.

C. THE APOGEE OF POPULISM (1946-1948)

When Gabriel Turbay, a moderate Liberal, won the party's nomination for the 1946 presidential election, Gaitán decided to run independently, and his forces shifted to a more militant stance. In the elections, the number of votes obtained by Gaitán were 44 percent of the liberal votes,⁸ even though he was not officially supported by his party. His invitation to the people to join against the oligarchy of both parties worried the established party leaders.⁹ This serious split among Liberals resulted in the election of the Conservative candidate, Mariano Ospina Perez, by a plurality of 42 percent of the electorate.

The transfer of power in 1946 ignited tensions between the two parties, resulting in violent political conflict, particularly in rural areas. Ospina assumed office, and was faced with the difficult task of ruling from a minority position, as Liberals had received the majority of all presidential votes and continued to control the Congress. Ospina tried to resolve this situation by incorporating Liberals into a coalition government. Meanwhile the level of political rivalry intensified in the countryside, where Conservatives pursued a course of violence and repression in an attempt to consolidate power after sixteen years out of office. Liberals retaliated and, under Gaitan's leadership, became highly mobilized around the demand that the Ospina government confront the social needs of the modernizing and urbanizing nation.

⁸ Pécaut, Daniel, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930-1954*, Siglo veintiuno Editores, 1987, p. 362.

⁹ Ibid.

Gaitanism, the populist social movement led by Gaitán as faction of the LP, increased dramatically between 1946 and 1948. Gaitán supported the democratic, rather than the revolutionary, path to reforms. By advocating the passage of more socially liberal policies, he appealed to the masses and he united urban workers and *campesinos*. The "worker's class" already had a political identity, generated in 1936 under the support of Alfonso López. The movement also used divisions in the Unions and the Communist party to obtain more followers. As the movement grew, observers believed that Gaitán would be elected president, which may have happened had he lived to see the next election.

Liberal victories in the 1947 congressional elections demonstrated the party's strength among the electorate. Ospina became increasingly concerned with retaining control, and further provoked Liberals by resorting frequently to police enforcement of Conservative privileges in the rural areas. The Liberal appointees in his government resigned in protest in March 1948.

D. "LA VIOLENCIA" (1948-1953)

On April 9, Gaitán was assassinated at midday in the heart of Bogotá. The inevitable explosion occurred in the form of the most violent and destructive riot in the country's long history of conflict. An angry mob immediately seized and killed the assassin. In the ensuing riot, some 2,000 people were killed, and a large portion of downtown Bogotá was destroyed. The "*Bogotazo*" as the episode came to be called, was

an expression of mass social frustration and grief by a people who had lost the man who represented their only potential link to the decision-making process. Due to a lack of leadership in the revolt, order was restored in Bogotá, and Ospina remained in control. The tempo of rural violence quickened from decentralized violence to a state of undeclared civil war known as "*La Violencia*" (the violence).

The violence didn't begin on April 9; a estimated total of 14,000 victims as of 1947 due to the rural conflict between the parties, is a proof of its prior existence.¹⁰ However, after Gaitán's death, the "law of blood and fire" increased substantially, and the general fare war known as "*La Violencia*" claimed over 200,000 lives during the next eighteen years, with the bloodiest period occurring between 1948 and 1958.¹¹ This phenomenon spread throughout the country, especially in the Andes and the *Llanos* (plains), sparing only the southernmost portion of Nariño and parts of the Caribbean coastal area. Extremely complex, the period was characterized by an heterogeneous mixture of electoral crashes and blind political rivalry, military actions, local vendettas, individual revenges, economic extortion born of organized guerrillas,¹² and social banditry. The basic cause of this protracted period of internal disorder, however, was the refusal of successive governments to accede to the people's demands for social, political and economic changes.

¹⁰ Pécaut, Daniel, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930-1954*, Siglo veintiuno Editores, 1987, p. 487. Information taken by the author from P. Oquist's *Violence, politics, and conflict in Colombia*, Bogota, Banco Popular, 1976.

¹¹ Ramsey, Russell, *Guerrilleros y Soldados*, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogota, 1981, p. 287.

¹² Guerrillas groups will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

After the Bogotazo, the Ospina government became more repressive. Liberal governors were fired, and the army forcibly closed the Congress. Rural police forces heightened the effort against belligerents and Liberals, and eventually all Liberals, from the ministerial to the local level, resigned their posts in protest. In October 1949, Laureano Gómez announced his candidacy for the presidency, after having been in semi-exile in Spain due to the events of April 9; the Liberals considered this to be a declaration of war. On the 28th of October the LP decided not to participate in the presidential elections, and days later presented in the Congress a motion to depose Mariano Ospina. His answer was to close the Congress, and impose a state of censorship and siege in all the national territory.

In the 1949 presidential election, Laureano Gómez, the only Conservative candidate, took office in 1950. Gómez was firmly in control of the party. As leader of the reactionary faction, he preferred authority, hierarchy, and order. Accusing the LP of falsifying voter identification, he became contemptuous of universal suffrage and majority rule. Gómez acquired broad powers and curtailed civil liberties in an attempt to confront the mounting violence and the possibility that the Liberals might regain power. Pro-labor laws passed in the 1930s were canceled by executive decree, independent labor unions were struck down, congressional elections were held without opposition, the press was censored, courts were controlled by the executive, and freedom of worship was challenged as mobs attacked Protestant chapels. Gómez directed his repression

particularly against the Liberal opposition, which he branded communist. In 1950, at the height of violence, the number of deaths reportedly reached 50,000.¹³

In the early 1950's, Liberal guerrillas began a process of rapid organization, and established a supply of small weapons. When Gómez took power, 4,500 organized men were in formal resistance against the government across the country, although some of them were not engaged in combat against military forces. During this first experience with guerrilla warfare, the Army increased in size to 15,000, the Navy to 3,200 (including Marines), and the Air Force to 1,200.¹⁴

Despite the relative prosperity of the economy, Gómez lost support because of protracted violence and his attacks on moderate Conservatives and the military establishment. Because of illness, in November 1951 Gómez allowed his first presidential designate, Roberto Urdaneta Arbeláez, to become acting president until Gómez was able to reassume the presidency. Although Urdaneta followed Gómez's policies, he refused to dismiss General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, whom Gómez suspected of conspiring against the government. When Gómez tried to return to office in June 1953, a coalition consisting of moderate Conservatives who supported Ospina, the LP, and the Armed Forces deposed him and installed a military government. They viewed this action as the only way to end the violence. Rojas Pinilla, who had led the coup d'état, assumed the presidency.

¹³ Pécaut, Daniel, *Orden y Violencia: Colombia 1930-1954*, Siglo veintiuno Editores, 1987, p. 489.

¹⁴ Ramsey, Russell, *Guerrilleros y Soldados*, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogota, 1981, p. 179.

E. THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT (1953-1957)

Initial response to the coup was enthusiastic and widespread; only the elements at the two extremes of the political spectrum protested the action. Rojas Pinilla's first goal was to end the violence, and to that end he offered amnesty and government aid to those belligerents who would lay down their arms. Thousands complied with the offer, and there was relative calm for several months after the coup. Other immediate steps taken by Rojas Pinilla included the transfer of the National Police to the Armed Forces in an effort to depoliticize the police, relaxation of press censorship, and release of political prisoners.

The government also started an extensive series of public works projects to construct transportation networks and hospitals, and improved the system of credit for small farmers. The National Social Welfare Service, under the direction of Gómez' daughter María Eugenia Rojas de Moreno Díaz, was created to meet the most pressing needs of the poor, and public works projects began to provide jobs for the masses of urban unemployed. The tax system was restructured to place more of the burden on the elite. Poorly administered, however, these reform programs met with little success. Rojas Pinilla was unable to restructure Colombian society.¹⁵

Support for the Rojas Pinilla regime faded within its first year. Toward the end of 1953, rural violence was renewed, and Rojas undertook strict measures to counter it. Following a substantial increase in police and military budgets, the government assumed

¹⁵ Sturges, Karen, "Historical Setting of Colombia", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 40.

a dictatorial character. The government reversed its initial reforms and relied instead on repression. In addition, economic deterioration, triggered by a drop in coffee prices and exacerbated by inflationary government policies, seriously threatened the gains made since World War II. Scorched-earth policies were introduced to confront the 20,000 belligerents estimated to be active in rural areas.

The old National Constitutional Assembly, created by Laureano Gomez, helped Rojas Pinilla in providing a legal facade for his dictatorship. A new constitution (the Constitution of 1886 had been abolished in 1954) created a Legislative Assembly composed of fifty-nine Conservatives and thirty-three Liberals, twenty of whom were nominated by Rojas. That assembly confirmed him as a President until 1962, an action that consolidated mounting opposition to Rojas Pinilla, and precipitated his subsequent fall from power. By early 1957, Liberal and Conservative elites decided to stop feuding and to join forces against the president under the banner of the National Front. A final agreement was signed in San Carlos in 1957, and provided a basis for power-sharing between the parties. The San Carlos Agreement also called for the following: restoration of the Constitution of 1886; the alternation of the presidency between the two parties every four years; parity between the parties in all legislative bodies; a required two-thirds majority vote for the passage of legislation; the establishment of an administrative career service of neutral parties not subject to partisan appointment; women's suffrage and equal political rights for women; and the devotion of at least 10 percent of the national budget to education.

As the party leaders laid the basis for a coalition government, the tides of discontent turned against Rojas Pinilla. With the arrest of Guillermo León Valencia, a Conservative leader involved in the creation of the National Front, Rojas Pinilla was confronted with student demonstrations, massive strikes, riots, and finally the declared opposition of the church and the defection of top-ranking military officers. In May 1957, faced with a multitude of protesters and top military leaders requesting his resignation, Rojas Pinilla resigned and went into temporary exile in Spain. Power reverted to a five-man military junta led by General Gabriel París, who promised the free election of a civilian president in August 1958.

F. THE NATIONAL FRONT (1957-1974)

In December 1957, Colombians voted overwhelmingly in a national plebiscite to approve the agreements that had been reached by the National Front as amendments to the Constitution of 1886. As a result of internal divisions within the CP, in August 1958 Lleras Camargo, a Liberal, was elected as the first president under the National Front. When he took office, he faced not only the problems of rivalry between Liberals and Conservatives, but also factional controversies within the two parties. He succeeded, however, in demonstrating that the National Front program could point the way to a restoration of constitutional government. His administration adopted vigorous measures to reduce banditry and rural violence.

Lleras Camargo introduced an austerity program to improve economic conditions, and in 1958 Colombia recorded its most favorable balance of trade in twenty years. A Law of Agrarian Reform, passed in 1961 provided for a new agency, the Colombian Institute of Agrarian Reform (INCORA). Lleras Camargo's government made only limited progress in land reform, due to opposition from Liberals who denounced the plan as inadequate, and from Conservatives who called it communistic and revolutionary. Nevertheless, by the end of his term in 1962, Lleras Camargo had done much to stabilize the economy, stimulate increased output of industrial and agricultural products, and bring the people a renewed confidence in the future.

Guillermo León Valencia became the next official Conservative candidate of the National Front, and was elected for the 1962-66 presidential term. Valencia took only modest steps to continue the programs initiated by his predecessor. He ignored, for example, the National Planning Department, failing to fill vacancies as they occurred. INCORA's land reform program also ran into opposition from large landholders. In addition, Valencia's finance minister, Carlos Sanz, devaluated the peso and proposed new taxes, thereby arousing the hostility of Congress.

Declining economic conditions contributed to growing social unrest. Inflation increased due to a drop in coffee prices and an increase in the printing of money; contraband trade with neighboring countries generated drains on the economy; and US \$64 million in foreign loans had been withheld, and the government was faced with a serious deficit.¹⁶ Rumors of plots against the government circulated, students protesting

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

high prices rioted in Bogotá, and kidnappings occurred frequently. Valencia declared a State of Siege in May 1965 and, having lost additional Congressional support, was forced to rule by decree. In mid 1965, the government applied other austerity measures. The United States and other international lending agencies then agreed to make loans to Colombia with the understanding that the government would take vigorous action to improve its financial situation. Inflation leveled off, and rumors of plots to remove the president died down.

1. Opposition to the National Front

Despite the constitutional amendment stipulating that only the LP and CP were authorized to participate in elections, groups opposing the National Front arrangement formed "movements" to challenge the establishment by presenting candidates under the Liberal and Conservative banners. In 1959, Liberal dissidents formed the Liberal Revolutionary Movement (MRL) under the leadership of Alfonso López Michelsen, son of former president López Pumarejo. The most serious challenge to the National Front arrangement came from the populist National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), which was founded in 1961 by Rojas Pinilla after his return from exile.

During the mid-1960s, the embers of La Violencia were clearly dying out, but Guerrilla activity was emerging. Banditry was now institutionalized, with the help of Marxist groups supporting a revolutionary style. In 1964 the National Liberation Army (ELN) was formed by students who were disenchanted with the pro-Soviet Communist Party of Colombia but were inspired by the Cuban Revolution. The ELN gained greater

notoriety when father Camilo Torres Restrepo, a Jesuit priest, joined the guerrilla group in 1966 and was killed in an armed conflict with government forces shortly thereafter. In 1966 another guerrilla movement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), began operating and was officially designated as a branch of the PCC.¹⁷

Carlos Lleras Restrepo, the third president under the National Front, proved to be an effective leader. Aided by an especially competent group of cabinet members, Lleras Restrepo enacted a number of reforms during his tenure in office. His different economic and social reforms drew support from international lending agencies, which helped ease the fiscal problems that had beset the Valencia Administration. The policies of the Lleras Restrepo administration resulted in an increased rate of economic growth. Nevertheless, an explosive population increase continued to add some 200,000 young Colombians to the labor force each year, and the problems of poverty and unemployment persisted.¹⁸ This administration originated a system of family planning that is still in effect, in spite of considerable church opposition.

Unrest in the late 1960s assumed a more urban and more nearly class-oriented base, as rural and inter-party violence receded. Rural disorders declined markedly as a consequence of optimism on the economic front and the capture of some of the most prominent guerrilla leaders. In 1968, however, a new guerrilla group -- the Popular

¹⁷ Walker, Phyllis, "Colombian National Security", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 268.

¹⁸ Bagley, Bruce, "The Society and its Environment", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 59.

Liberation Army (EPL) -- was formed as the armed branch of the Communist Party, with a pro-Chinese orientation.

In December 1968, Lleras Restrepo lifted the stage of siege that had been imposed under Valencia in 1965. Sporadic incidents of violence occurred, however, especially among dissident students and labor Union members, and the government reinstated its emergency powers on several occasions. Dissidence within the LP was lessened with the reintegration of the MRL, headed by López Michelsen, who came to play a valuable role in the Lleras Restrepo government. In the 1968 congressional elections, supporting elements of the National Front gained a strong majority, but voter apathy persisted, with less than 40 percent of eligible voters participating.

Under the banner of ANAPO, Rojas Pinilla continued his appeal to the urban masses and the peasantry, promising solutions to the problems of unemployment and inflation, and advocating free education and health care for the poor. ANAPO challenged the National Front by presenting Rojas Pinilla as a Conservative candidate for the presidency in 1970. The election took place in an atmosphere of escalating violence, and the public received with widespread skepticism the official announcement that the Conservative candidate of the National Front, Misael Pastrana Borrero, had won by a narrow margin of 65,000 votes.¹⁹ The outpouring of support for Rojas Pinilla indicated significant voter dissatisfaction with the National Front's response to Colombia's persistent social and economic problems.

¹⁹ Sturges, Karen, "Historical Setting", in *Colombia a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 46.

2. Dismantling the Coalition Apparatus

Pastrana Borrero was the last president to be elected under the provisions of the National Front. The parity provision for elective legislative bodies and the exclusion of nontraditional parties from participation in elections were eliminated on the local level. Pastrana termed his administration the "Social Front" and followed most of the policies of his predecessor. In two areas of economic policy, however, he differed: land reform and the status of the construction sector. Land reform included promises of redistribution. This effort failed to influence due to the interests of landowners, but an effort was made to modernize the sector. In industrial policy, Pastrana chose construction as the leading sector and engine of growth for the economy. Private investment was encouraged through the establishment of the Units of Constant Purchasing Power (UPAC), a system by which investment not only accrued interest but also was adjusted for inflation. The combination of the UPAC system and huge investment in construction over stimulated the economy and fueled inflation, which reached 27 percent by 1974.

Guerrilla activity continued during the Pastrana Administration. In 1972, yet another guerrilla group the 19th of April Movement (M-19) -- emerged. The M-19 took its name from the date on which Rojas Pinilla was narrowly and, in their minds, fraudulently, defeated by Pastrana. Although the M-19 claimed to be the armed branch of ANAPO, the Rojas Pinilla organization disavowed any connection to the group.

G. THE POST-NATIONAL FRONT PERIOD

The LP and the CP were weak, divided into factions, and inadequately organized at the end of the existence of the National Front in 1974. Because the political parties were not eager to engage in intense competition, Colombia achieved a peaceful transition to an open system. The principle of power sharing was retained, although a president was allowed to select appointees from whatever sources he chose if the opposition refused to participate in his government.

The experience of the National Front, the lack of organizational efforts by the parties, and massive migrations from rural to urban areas weakened party affiliations, which also decreased the likelihood of inter-party violence. The period after the National Front also reflected a growing gap between the issues and agendas of the political elite and the demands, concerns, and expectations of the populace. Political apathy and cynicism among the people increased. Thus, Colombia experienced a radicalization of peasant movements, an increase in urban protests, a growing restlessness within the urban labor movement, and a surge in rural and urban guerrilla activity.

Popular discontent with the government's management of the economy continued despite steady economic growth and high primary export revenues. The massive underground economy, fueled by drug trafficking, undermined the government's efforts to control inflation, and contributed to the rise of a parallel financial market, placing a large part of the national economy beyond the control of legitimate authority.²⁰

²⁰ Hornbeck, J.F., "The Economy", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1990, p. 141.

H. SUMMARY

Colombia's political landscape was characterized by constant oscillation between the traditional parties. At various times, for varying reasons, and with variable levels of justification, the political confrontations between these two parties, and some of their internal factions, degenerated into violent conflict.

The conflicting and often violent nature of Colombian political life formed the political environment in which the modern development of the country has taken place. How this political competition is related to the various demands of stakeholders in political violence is discussed in the following chapter.

III. STAKEHOLDERS IN INSURGENCY

A. THE GUERRILLAS

Modern political violence in Colombia began as a product of the civil war known as "*La Violencia*." The frequency and scale of attacks and counterattacks between supporters of both political parties increased after the congressional elections of 1947, and becoming even more vicious after the 1949 presidential election.

By 1950, Liberal guerrilla squads were operating in the *Llanos* (plains east of the Andes) and elsewhere to retaliate against Conservative farms and villages. It is estimated that 20,000 people bore arms in the Liberal guerrilla groups between 1949 and 1953. ²¹In some areas, the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) attempted to organize these Liberal groups, as well as its own members, for guerrilla warfare, thus bringing an ideological dimension to the political violence of the period. Conservatives also organized armed groups to defend against Liberal attacks, or, in many cases, simply to attack Liberals. In August 1952, in the municipality of Viota (Cundinamarca), the first national conference of "Popular National Liberation Movements" took place. Among those attending was Manuel Marulanda Velez, one of the first founders of a formal Colombian guerrilla movement.

²¹ Maullin, Richard, *Soldiers, Guerrillas, and Politics in Colombia*, Rand Corporation, 1973, p. 6.

In those years, the commanders of both the communist and Liberal guerrilla groups, who were fighting in the central Andes against the conservative establishment, agreed to unify their forces. They established in southern Tolima what became known as the *Comando de El Davis* (the Davis Command).²² Due to ideological differences, soon the Liberal guerrillas, referred to as "clean Liberals", not only separated from but actually entered into combat with the communist guerrillas, referred to as "common Liberals." When General Rojas Pinilla came to power, many of these Liberal and Conservative irregulars retired, taking advantage of amnesties offered by the national government from 1953 on. Violence did not dissipate, however. Numerous individuals and groups drifted towards banditry after 1953.

The arrival of the National Front largely checked inter-party electoral violence, but did not eliminate all of the forces that had participated in it in the preceding decades. Some of the guerrillas active in the post-1958 period came under tutelage and financial support of the Colombian Communist Party (PCC). Of the estimated 129 guerrilla and bandit groups active since the intensification of political violence in 1949, 47 (36 percent) still existed in 1963, and 22 (17 percent) were considered to be actively engaged in some form of illegal and violent activity.²³ These bands were active in portions of Caldas, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Huila, Quindio, Tolima, Valle, and Cauca (Refer to Figure 1, page 8).

²² Osterling, Jorge, *Democracy in Colombia*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (USA), 1989, p. 278.

²³ Guzman, German, *La Violencia en Colombia*, Vol. 2, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogota, 1962, pp. 282-326.

Between the establishment of the National Front and the appearance, in 1964, of the first communist guerrillas, there were approximately 1,128 incidents of violence suspected to have some relationship to the Liberal-Conservative feud of a few years before.²⁴

The relationship with the PCC was firmly established by 1964, as evidenced by the formation in that year of the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Southern Guerrilla Bloc, which became the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 1966. In effect the Communist party sought to co-opt several of the then existing armed groups, the most prominent of which operated in the so called "independent Republics" of Marquetalia, El Pato, Guayabero and Sumapaz Regions (Departments of Cundinamarca and Tolima). The insurgent groups soon claimed to be revolutionaries in pursuit of national goals, yet geographically, they tended to operate in the same regions that were affected in the past by "*La violencia*".

Military actions eliminated those guerrilla enclaves before the second half of the 1960s. The guerrilla groups, including the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), which was created in 1968, made their reappearance in the 1970s. The groups in general used foreign models of revolution, expecting easy join of the masses to quickly join this effort against the elites. However, by the mid 1970s, it was clear that these movements were an important political factor in the country. Not one of these groups obtained complete support from the countrymen or even control over their organizations. Trapped by the army in their centers of operations, the EPL and ELN were near extinction, but the

²⁴ Ibid.

government stopped military action when it considered the groups defeated and willing to enter political negotiations.

Guerrilla activity appeared to be under control, when two factors reinitiated the problem in the first half of the 1980s. First was the appearance of the M-19. Claiming fraud in the 1970 elections, the group began staging important actions which gave them free propaganda, and reintroduced the idea of achieving "real democracy" through the use of armed force. The second factor is the response of the Turbay government,²⁵ which some analysts see as excessive. The persecution of several political activists and union leaders produced new recruits that reinforced the FARC and helped to revive the EPL and ELN.

In spite of the surge of guerrilla activity in the 1980s, the conditions that would have allowed the rise to power of these groups were not present. At the end of the 1980s, four major leftist guerrilla organizations were active in Colombia: The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), with 6,000 members; the 19th of April Movement (M-19), with 2,000 members; the National Liberation Army (ELN), with 1,500 members; and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), with 600 members.²⁶ A number of smaller, less structured guerrilla groups also carried out operations against the government. These included the Worker's Revolutionary Party (PRT), the Workers' Self-Defense Movement (MAO), Free Homeland (*Patria Libre*), and the Quintin Lame Command, formed by a

²⁵ Walker, Phyllis, "National Security", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Washington, 1990, p. 299.

²⁶ Osterling, Jorge, *Democracy in Colombia*, Transaction Publishers, 1989. -- Note: the figures relating to membership are based on estimates discussed by former President Lleras Restrepo in the February 16, 1987 issue of *Nueva Frontera*, p. 266.

small portion of the Colombian Indian population. During the late 1980s, analysts estimated that there were between 8,000 and 11,000 guerrillas.²⁷ The groups were spread all over the country, but maintained the most active presence in the rural areas of the eastern plains and the Departments of Arauca, Antioquia (especially the Uraba Gulf), Southern Huila, Caqueta, Cordoba, Cesar, Cauca, and Northern and Southern Santander.

The first cease-fire agreement of the 1980's took place in 1984, during the government of Belisario Betancourt. The FARC, M-19, and the EPL agreed to be involved in a national dialogue to set the terms for reincorporation into national life. However this dialogue was vaguely defined, and the groups resumed military activities after only a few months. The only tangible result of this effort was the formation of the Patriotic Union (UP), which is the political arm of the FARC. The UP is still active today, although diminished due to internal conflicts and assassinations carried out by extremists of the right wing. This decline in UP support and participation is evidenced by voter behavior through the 1980's. In 1986, the UP received 2% of the total votes cast in congressional elections; by 1988, the UP percentage of total votes cast had dwindled to 0.1%.²⁸

Another important feature of the 1980's was the intent of the guerrillas to be united in a common front. In 1986, the M-19 tried to form an "Americas Army" by joining with Peru's Shining Path, the revolutionary movement Tupac Amaru, and Ecuador's Alfaro

²⁷ Walker, Phyllis, "National Security", in *Colombia a Country Study*, Washington, 1990, p. 300.

²⁸ *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil* (The Colombian government agency responsible for vote tabulation) as cited in Buitrago and Zamora's *Al Filo del Caos*, p. 158.

Lives, Damn It! (*!Alfaro vive, Carajo!*) group. The National Guerrillas were also organized into what was called the National Guerrilla Coordinating Board (CNG), which, after increasing attacks on and assassination of guerrilla sympathizers by right wing groups, was restructured as the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Coordinating Board (*Coordinadora Guerrillera Simon Bolivar*).

By the beginning of the 1990's some of these groups were reincorporated into national political life, and the M-19, the EPL and Indian groups are today represented in the Congress. The FARC, the ELN, and a small dissident fraction of the EPL are the groups that are presently active in traditional guerrilla activities. Today President Gaviria's government is negotiating with a dissident fraction of the ELN, which is expected to become a legal organization by mid-1994.

In order to allow a more complete understanding of guerrilla activity in Colombia today, the following sections detail the origins and evolution of the four guerrilla groups that have had the most profound and continuing efforts on Colombian society; the FARC, the ELN, M-19, and the EPL.

1. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)

Today, the FARC remains the largest of Colombia's guerrilla groups. The group was founded in 1966 by Manuel Marulanda Velez -- known by the nickname Sure Shot (*Tirofijo*) -- and other members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Colombia (PCC). At its beginning, the group included approximately 500 armed militants, and several thousand peasants were recruited as self defense groups for

support.²⁹ Military operations began as raids against military posts and facilities to accumulate arms and equipment. By the early 1970s, the organization had been weakened by both government military operations and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Colombia and the Soviet Union.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, the FARC came to the forefront, using the political situation of the country to gain support, and financing activities through kidnapping and extortion. By 1978, the FARC maintained operations on five fronts, and by September 1980, the organization was regarded as the strongest of the guerrilla groups. In 1987, organization membership was estimated at 6,000 militants, who were active on at least twenty-seven fronts.³⁰ Today, its membership is reduced, as are the number of fronts of operation, due to the lack of support from the rural population and the recomposition strategies that have been applied by the government.

2. The National Liberation Army (ELN)

Founded in 1964 by Fabio Velasquez Castaño, the ELN was inspired by the Cuban Revolution. Its leadership was composed mainly of students and graduates of the Industrial University of Santander Department.³¹ At the beginning, ELN activities centered on the Department of Santander, and included seizing temporary control of small towns, opening jails to free prisoners, robbing banks, and making anti-government speeches in small villages with the intention of gaining recruits. The organization gained

²⁹ Maullin, Richard, *Soldiers, Guerrillas, and Politics in Colombia*, Rand Corporation, 1973, p. 28.

³⁰ Walker, Phyllis, "National Security", in *Colombia a Country Study*, Washington, 1990, p. 300.

³¹ Maullin, Richard, *Soldiers, Guerrillas, and Politics in Colombia*, Rand Corporation, 1973, p. 41.

international notoriety in 1966, when it recruited Father Camilo Torres Restrepo, a well educated Roman Catholic Priest. Only four months after taking up arms, Torres was killed in a confrontation with an army Patrol.

In the early 1970s, the organization was decimated by an effective military counterinsurgency campaign in the vicinity of the Antioquia municipality of Anori in the Middle Magdalena River Valley.³² By 1975 the ELN had regained its strength, engaging in kidnappings, bank robberies, and assassinations, including the killing of the Inspector General of the Army General Ramon Arturo Rincon Quiñones. The ELN was the only major guerrilla group that did not sign the 1984 cease-fire agreement. In the late 1980's, the ELN was estimated to have a membership of more than 1,500.³³ Its theater of operations is centered around the departments of Arauca, Santander, Northern Santander, and Cesar. Today, the ELN is headed by the another Catholic priest, the Spaniard Manuel Perez (Cura Perez). The group is notorious for its constant attacks on Colombian economic institutions and foreign investors, including kidnappings and attacks that target petroleum installations, pipelines, and exploratory drilling sites.

3. The M-19 Movement

The 19th of April Movement, M-19, traces its origins to the allegedly fraudulent presidential elections of April 19, 1970, when the former military Dictator Rojas Pinilla of the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), was defeated by Misael Pastrana Borrero.

³² Osterling, Jorge, *Democracy in Colombia*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (USA), 1989, p. 308.

³³ Walker, Phyllis, "National Security", in *Colombia a Country Study*, Washington, 1990, p. 306.

During the early 1970s, Carlos Toledo Plata and Jaime Bateman Cayon distinguished themselves as M-19's principal leaders and ideologues.³⁴ Toledo, a physician, was an ANAPO representative in Congress. Bateman served as M-19's principal commander for military operations. Both these men died during the 1980s -- Toledo shot by two men believed linked to right-wing extremists financed by the drug cartels, and Bateman in an airplane crash.

The M-19 ideological orientation was a mixture of populism and nationalistic revolutionary socialism. By 1985, the group was estimated to have between 1,500 and 2,000 members, making it the second largest guerrilla group in that time period.³⁵ The beginnings of the group were based in urban operations. In 1974, the group's theft of Simon Bolivar's sword and spurs gained it national attention. Two years later, the group kidnapped and murdered a union official accused of having ties to the CIA. By 1977, the M-19 began a campaign of economic sabotage, targeting government officials and offices of multinational corporations in an effort to drive foreign investment from the country. In 1980, the seizure and occupation, for sixty-one days, of the Dominican Republic's Bogota Embassy, during which twelve diplomatic personnel, including the United States ambassador, were held hostage, gained the group international notoriety.

In 1984, M-19 joined the cease-fire agreement proposed by Betancourt's government, but late in 1985 the accord unraveled, and they returned to armed

³⁴ Osterling, Jorge, *Democracy in Colombia*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (USA), 1989, p. 300.

³⁵ Walker, Phyllis, "National Security", in *Colombia a Country Study*, Washington, 1990, p. 304.

confrontations. In October 1985, the group wounded the then Commanding General of the Army, Samudio. By far, the most spectacular operation of M-19 came the following month, when its commandos seized the Palace of Justice in Bogota. The ensuing battle between M-19 and the military left over 100 dead, including 11 Supreme Court Judges and all the guerrillas present in the operation.³⁶

After this incident the group's activity diminished. The group attempted to join with other Latin American guerrillas, but this intent was prevented by a military anti-insurgent campaign. In March 1987, the group's top political and military strategist, Alvaro Fayad, was killed. At the end of the 1980s, the group signed a peace agreement with the government of Virgilio Barco. M-19 leader Carlos Pizarro became a presidential candidate, but was killed by agents of the Medellin Cartel, and was subsequently replaced by Antonio Navarro Wolf.

4. The Popular Liberation Army (EPL)

The EPL was the only major group to espouse a Maoist political ideology, endorsing the concept of prolonged popular war. Organized in 1968, as the armed front of the Marxist Leninist Communist Party (a dissident pro-Peking group of the PCC), its first military operations were in the Department of Cordoba on the Caribbean Coast. The founders were Pedro Vasquez Rendon, Pedro Leon Arboleda, Francisco Caraballo, Oscar Willian Calvo, and Libardo Mora. Internal dissension, and the deaths of some of its key leaders during the 1970s, weakened the EPL's operational capabilities. Despite its Maoist orientation, the group chose to participate in the cease-fire agreement of 1984, but it

³⁶ Ibid.

refused to sign a peace agreement. Following the death of its leader, Ernesto Rojas, the organization broke the cease fire. In 1987 the EPL's size was estimated at approximately 600 guerrillas organized on four fronts.³⁷ In 1991, the group signed a peace agreement with the government, and was allowed, along with the political movement M-19, to participate in the development of the new constitution and the following Congress. The group has recently changed its name to "Hope, Peace, and Liberty" (*Esperanza Paz y Libertad* -- EPL).

B. INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIETAL STAKEHOLDERS

Since the mid-19th century, the Liberal and Conservative parties have been practically the only social organizations to identify a civil society in a process of configuration. Together with the Catholic church, this bipartisanship defined the political capacity of the State in an underdeveloped, regionally fragmented, agrarian society.

The principal problem with bipartisan government was not only its reduction of social coverage, but the effects for the state produced by the political configuration after the National Front. By the 1970's, the State was effective in responding to social demands only in as much as the response would generate votes. Any other type of interest, not related to electoral capital, was processed in an incidental way. Within this framework, the dynamic of the system was dependent on a "clientship" use of the State's resources.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 307.

In contrast, the organizations from capitalist sectors -- generally the production and commercialization groups -- generally had been capable of breaking the bipartisan machinery when their interests were in jeopardy, generating policies that favored these groups at the expense of the popular classes. This near-to-direct political access of such organizations was facilitated by the capitalist rationale at work in the macroeconomic policies of the State. That rationale had been used by the executive branch, sometimes behind the back of the congress and political parties, against the official bureaucracy of clientship.

The mentioned weaknesses of the political system plus the inefficient interventions of the state, generated a political and social crisis. This crisis revolved around the credibility and legitimacy of political institutions. The principal axis of the political conflict was no longer between Liberals and Conservatives, but between those who supported and believed in the *system*, and those who opposed it. The guerrillas focused their efforts against the established order, advocating revolutionary war as the only means of achieving profound change. The country's commercial and social institutions, whether of their own volition or as victims of circumstance, also became stakeholders in the insurgent confrontation. As guerrilla activity alternately blessed and blighted these institutions they came to exert influences of their own on the crisis.

The institutional stakeholders are the political parties, the industrialists, the Catholic Church, and the military.³⁸ Each of these groups believes in the system and in

³⁸ The proposed division of stakeholders is based on the book *Al Filo del Caos*, edited by Francisco Leal and Leon Zamosc, Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991.

general are negatively affected by the actions of the guerrillas, or the possibility of change in the established order. Societal stakeholders relationship to insurgency is more complex. The workers, the rural population, and various civic movements expect change, and in that sense they are vulnerable to guerrilla actions that coincide with their interests. However, when there is the possibility of achieving change through dialogue, they prefer this less expensive method, and become supporters of the system. Due to this particular situation, they are sometimes between the lines of fire between the guerrillas and the institutional stakeholders. The interests of this group are individual, rather than societal, but are driven by economic motivations. Depending on how guerrilla activity affects their illegal activities, they are either allies or enemies of the insurgency.

1. The Political Parties

When the bipartisan system was institutionalized, the Colombian parties represented an extension of the oligarchic structure that dominated Colombian society. Challenges to the traditional structure of power, including those represented in insurgent actions, were systematically frustrated throughout Colombian history, due to the ability of dominant groups to control resources in moments of serious danger. In examining the history of the historical parties, it is possible to see how the bipartisan control of the country contributed to the choice of violence as a means of change.

a. Organizational Structure of the Parties

Since the beginning of the republic, Colombian political movements have tended to organize themselves around strong leaders, who themselves have tended to

gravitate toward the bases power held by the two traditional parties. People have avidly followed regional and national leaders in electoral debates and armed conflicts. Political activists and the people at large have tended to identify themselves with names of politicians at the national level. As a result, politicians have become individualists, creating in their parties a considerable amount of factionalism. Sometimes the division of the parties has resulted in the loss of a presidential election which the party as a whole has maintained a clear majority. Sometimes alliances are made with factions across party boundaries further confusing the political landscape. It has been argued that the parties did not have governing programs or structured ideologies, but were rather interested in being elected to gain access to public resources.

Early on, the Colombian parties were dominated by a close circle of professional politicians from the upper and middle classes. They were territorially decentralized, with departments (provinces) as the basic electoral units, and decision making performed by the national congressmen. Even if the members of a party were in alignment with one leader, it did not indicate the presence of an oligarchic structure for decision making; the relationship was more of a reciprocal one. The center of historical partisan activity was in the congress. Due to a lack of organizational strength, the congressmen have depended significantly on their electoral machinery for reelection. The basic resource for bargaining has been governmental patronage in the form of bureaucratic employment and dispensation of funds.

Even with the ongoing corruption inherent in such a system, however, the impact of clientship in elections diminished considerably in recent years. This is due, in part, to the modernization of the country. As more modern conveniences have been made available to urban populations, the ability of the political establishment to offer them something more has diminished. Also, the growth of urban areas (which came to include 70% of the population), decreased the power of the clientship practices, which were historically more effective in rural areas. Another factor that affected the decline of clientship was the growth of the middle class, which is, in the main, employed in the private sector, and views government expenditure from the perspective of the taxpayer, rather than as a beneficiary of social services.³⁹

The incentives provided by politicians helped them during congressional election campaigns, but were not enough to manipulate the course of presidential elections. Even though congressional politicians influence the nomination of presidential candidates, the campaign for the presidency has its own dynamic, more dependent on individual charisma than on clientship practices.

The political passions fueled the period known as La Violencia are no longer present. Present evidence suggests that there is a growing proportion of citizens who no longer identify with the traditional parties; either choosing to vote independently or not vote at all. In Bogota for example, among eligible voters Liberal Party membership decreased from 61% in 1970 to 36.3% in 1982, and that of the Conservative Party from

³⁹ Hoskin, Gary, *Postnational Front Trends in the Colombian Political Party System*, Pittsburgh, 1979, p. 22.

25.3% to 18.9% over the same period.⁴⁰ For this reason, elections, particularly for president elections, are each time more dependent on the candidate's ability to appeal to individuals, rather than party blocs. An example of this trend was the victory in 1982 of the Conservative candidate Belisario Betancourt, when the majority of voters in the election were Liberal.

b. Democratic Transition and Political Crisis

In the 1980's, Colombian society was looking for more political participation and more equitable distribution of wealth, yet the politicians managed to avoid such change. After the demise of the National Front, presidents tried to implement institutional reform (specifically *constitutional* reform), but the Supreme Court and the Congress were reluctant to modify the system by which they had come to power. Over time, the inability to achieve reform within the system became apparent and, as a result, disgruntled interests began to resort to extra-legal channels.

Two other problems contributed to limiting the capacity of the parties to achieve political reform. Even though they are independent, parties' autonomy tends to be counter-productive, leading to the pursuit of narrowly defined and exclusive interests. When the parties do not include a wide spectrum of interests in their program, a crisis of representation can occur, limiting the state's ability to effectively conduct the business of the people. Even if the government can legitimately function as a representation of the people, the division between party interest and national interest can stall the decision making process. Since the times of Gaitán, Colombians have talked about the "political

⁴⁰ Ibid.

country" and the "national country" to represent the separation between parties and government that impedes progress in structural reform.

2. The Military

While an in-depth analysis of the military's involvement in Colombian insurgency issues is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is necessary to acknowledge the institution's position as a stakeholder in the crisis of political violence. This is true for two reasons. First, it is the military who executes the government's strategies to directly confront the guerrilla threat. Similarly, when the government launches a peace initiative, and directs the military to reduce its attacks on guerrilla units, it is the military that must contend with a renewed and revived guerrilla population if and when those peace initiatives fail. Secondly, the military has constitutional obligations to the nation other than those involving *internal security*. While there are a myriad motivations of individual military officers, ranging from concern over the country's future to a deep-seated aversion to the guerrillas, the two factors mentioned above are what brings the military to the issue as an institutional stakeholder in the early 1990s.

In Colombia, the armed forces include the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the National Police. The Army is the biggest of the forces (109,000) , with a size about ten times that of the Air Force (9,500) and seven times that of the Navy (15,500).¹ The National Police are comparable in size to the Army.

⁴¹ Colombian Defense Ministry: Annual Report -- 1993. These proportions have remained stable during an overall increase in personnel throughout the 1980s.

Beside the historic reasons, the nature of the internal conflicts in Colombia, explain the preponderance of land forces. The basic characteristic of the forces to be implanted in the national territory is dispersion. Is very hard to find a tactical unit (battalion), complete in one place. The Army has mostly light equipment, and independently of the internal conflict, the topography of the national territory make difficult the operation of heavy equipment.

The Officers and Petty-Officers are professionals, and the mass of troops is composed by draftees. The military service in Colombia is compulsory, but because of reasons of size, only part of the eligible citizens are recruited. In the present, the Army is using with great success the concept of "professional soldiers" for special operations. The base of recruitment had changed in the last twenty years. From recruiting rural population, the tendency in the present is mostly urban (because of the rapid urbanization of the society), and include a wide spectrum of the different social classes.⁴²

a. The Modern Colombian Military

The evolution of the modern Colombian military has involved three distinct phases since the inauguration of the Reyes presidency at the turn of the century.⁴³

In the first of these phases of development came about with the installation of the Reyes' government after the War of a Thousand Days. The government believed that developing the military as an institution of the state, rather than as various militias with

⁴² College students from the middle and upper class are included, but their service is short and not involved in counter-insurgency control.

⁴³ Maullin, Richard L., *Soldiers, Guerrillas, and Politics in Colombia*, Rand Corporation, 1973, p. 55.

allegiance to factions and parties, would serve to give all Colombians an institution in which to take national pride and place trust. It was also a central government aim to involve the military as a major player in rebuilding the infrastructure of the country that had been in large measure destroyed during the period of civil war. Their purpose was two-fold. First, it was hoped that the people's view of the military as a non-partisan and benevolent institution would be enhanced. Secondly, the military that the Reye's government conceived was the only institution that was capable of taking on the task of rebuilding roads, bridges, and lines of communication. It was during this phase of the military's development that the Military Cadet School, the Naval Cadet School, and the Superior War College were founded. The Superior War College was modeled on Prussia's *Kriegsacademie*, and is perhaps the most visible example of the influence of Prussian military thought on the Colombian military throughout this phase of development. The focus on Prussian, or more generally European, military philosophy was intended to develop a professional military that would avoid political involvement at all costs. In keeping with this line of thinking, the government began to develop a national system of compulsory military service, and to open military educational institutions to students across the social and economic classes of the country. By the mid-1920s, compulsory service had been adopted, and an increasing number of students enrolled at the Military Cadet School came from the middle class.

The second period was inaugurated by external conflict and involved an expansion of the military and a review of its operational practices. In the mid-1930s,

Colombia became involved in a territorial conflict with Peru over an area along the Amazon River. The confrontation centered around the town of Leticia, but most of the military action was waged in the surrounding jungle. This dispute, in which the military was successful in defending Colombia's territorial interests, was significant in the development of the modern military for two reasons. First, the ranks of the military swelled with Colombians united in a national cause. In giving the nation a cause around which to unite for the achievement of national, rather than partisan, goals, the conflict was in large measure responsible for developing a professionally non-political military. This would prove to be a crucial factor, for many of the young recruits of the military and its educational institutions during this period, and for several years thereafter, would later lead the military through the periods of violence and instability that were to come. The second impact of the conflict was to force the military leadership to realize two things: the European mode of making war was entirely inappropriate to the jungles of South America, and; beyond internal considerations, such as maintaining a professional, non-partisan orientation and serving to advance the development of the country, the military had external security responsibilities for which it was ill-prepared. Before the outbreak of conflict with Peru, any attempt to procure more resources for an expansion of the military was contingent on the military's ability to provide social services, according to the original intent of the Reyes' government. The sudden realization of the possibility of external conflict caused a considerable increase in resources available to the military. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, however, military-civil relations were strained by the

election of the Liberal Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo, who made no secret of his disdain for military officers, whom he considered to be instruments of the Conservative party. His solution for putting the military to use and maintaining his hold on power was to send military units to colonize remote parts of the country. This plan was not well received by the military, which now viewed itself as a professional, battle hardened force. A subsequent Liberal president, Eduardo Santos, was more interested in building upon the civil-military relationship, and World War II provided an excellent vehicle for the task. The European military missions that had been closed during and after the war with Peru as a result of the failure of European battle strategy were replaced with a military mission from the United States, offering training and technology in return for a joint strategy of defense for the Panama Canal. It was Lopez intention that the military focus on *developing its technological and strategic capabilities*, and he further hoped that close ties with the US military might extend the development of a military institution that was non-partisan and promoted democratic ideals.

The third period of the military's development revolved around the issues of counter-insurgency and internal security, and evolved along with the period of political conflict known as *La Violencia*. As conflict between Conservatives and Liberals intensified through the latter half of the 1940s, it became increasingly apparent that the National Police were incapable of maintaining order. The military became more and more involved in trying to maintain peace throughout the country. When Laureano Gómez was elected in the 1949 elections that were boycotted by the Liberal Party, he saw

the military as another instrument to use against the Liberals. He increased the military budget by 81% within his first two years in office, and advanced the view that the military's loyalty to the state rested on its allegiance to the Conservative Party. The military leadership was concerned over the politicization of the military, but another world event, the Korean War, provided Gómez with an opportunity to give the military leadership something else to think about. Over 3,000 Colombian troops were committed to the UN cause in Korea and, for the moment, the military policy revolved around the provision, training, and support of this mission. All the while, however, the military was taking on an increasing role in the country's internal peacekeeping activities. This period of development of the Colombian military as the institution responsible for public order climaxed in 1953, when General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla carried out a coup under the banner of "The Military Government."

b. The Military's Political View

As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, Colombia's military has struggled to maintain a non-political stance throughout the country's history. This struggle has revolved primarily around the operative definition of "guerrilla" at any given point in time. Colombia has known partisan guerrillas, known to their supporters as patriots, as well as guerrillas who reject the notion of the multi-party political system in its entirety. The tendency of the Colombian military has been to aggressively pursue insurgents in the latter category, and to more carefully navigate a non-partisan course in periods when political violence has maintained a partisan character.

Rojas' came to power with the consent of the military, but the principal reason for his rise to power was the fact that both Liberal and Conservative party leaders were alarmed by the increasingly autocratic nature of the Gómez presidency. While Gómez began as a Conservative, his personal political leanings were more Falangist in nature. The Liberal party was always opposed to Gómez, but it took time for the Conservative party to realize that his actions were not in their interests. At the same time, the military was becoming increasingly concerned over its role in supporting a regime that did not represent the democratic expression of the Colombian people's will.

The Rojas' dictatorship, for that is what it became, soon began to resemble the Gómez administration that it had replaced. As time went on, it became increasingly apparent to the military leadership that the main aim of the Rojas' regime was to increase the personal influence of its head, and excluded the welfare of the country. Despite the efforts of Liberal and Conservative politicians, and careful suggestions on the part of the military leadership, Rojas' continued to operate in an autocratic and arbitrary manner.

For the military, consenting to Rojas' seizure of power reflected the military's willingness to serve as an arbiter of dispute and interim source of leadership so that the country's political disputes could be resolved before they deteriorated into another period of civil war. By 1957, it was clear to the military that this goal was not shared by the Rojas' regime. In one of the most important decisions ever made by the Colombian military, a group representing all military commands removed Rojas' from power on May 10, 1957.

While the Rojas' period of power is generally referred to as a period of "military government," it was only after the military deposed him that it truly had an opportunity to rule the country. At this point, the military was popular with the people: it had removed a dictator from power, and it represented the single national institution which considered national, as opposed to regional or sectoral, interests. If anyone thought the military to be concerned with its own interests over those of the nation, subsequent events were to prove how wrong they were.

The *Junta Militar* which replaced Rojas immediately began a process of national reconciliation, with the objective of restoring civilian government. Within one year, the National Front had come to office.

During the National Front, the military retained its internal focus, but developed an even more active role in the general development of the country. Minister of Defense General Alberto Ruiz Novoa was convinced that, just as important as the duty of combating active insurgents, the military had a responsibility to aid the development of the nation so as to prevent conditions that had previously motivated people to engage in political violence.

c. The Military's Stake

The Colombian Armed Forces, have some unique characteristics among traditional Latin American military institutions, among them:

- ♦ There is no tradition of military governments. Even the short arrival of the military to power from 1953 to 1957, was marked by conflicts between the political parties, which left temporary military leadership as the only available option.
- ♦ Colombian military expenditures, and the size of its armed forces, is very modest in comparative terms. By the late 1980s, Colombia had the lowest military expenditure in South America as a proportion of the GNP.⁴⁴
- ♦ Since 1948, the Armed Forces, especially the Army, has been immersed in tasks of control of the public order. The demands of internal security situations occupy the virtual majority of army activity, and considerable portions of the resources of the other military branches as well.

The militaries by constitution must be apolitical. The politicians constantly invoke this characteristic, and deliberations or opinions of military leaders about internal issues are usually not permitted. This opinion can be summarized in a speech made by president Alberto Lleras Camargo in 1958:

Politics are not going to enter the bodies of national defense; any pressure could not lead me to oppose what I understand as the protection of peace and the warranty of good defense for the Republic, which is the impartiality, and political neutrality of the Armed Forces.⁴⁵

According with Armando Borrero, the political orientation of the Armed Forces had been the Anti-Communism, and criticize the low emphasis in the internal conditions of the conflict.⁴⁶ However, the military involvement in helping social

⁴⁴ Borrero, Armando, "Militares Política y Sociedad" in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, F., ed., 1991, p. 175.

⁴⁵ Lleras, Alberto, *Escritos Selectos*, Colombian Institute of Culture, Bogota, 1976, p. 136.

⁴⁶ Borrero, Armando, "Militares, Política y Sociedad", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco,

development have been an historic constant. Russell Ramsey⁴⁷ describe the officers involved in this efforts as members of a "Humanistic School" within the Military Forces. One of the examples that he presents, is the Army Colonel Eduardo Roman Bazurto, who in the 1950s, organized successful programs of self-defense to prevent violence in the "Llanos" (eastern planes). Also in 1962 the Minister of Defense General Alberto Ruiz Novoa, was convinced that the Army not only was a tool to destroy the guerrilla, but a tool to attack the social and economic causes as well as the historic political reasons for their existence. Since he was minister of war, the military training broadened to include courses in social sciences, the units develop civic-military actions, and more enlisted personnel participate in programs of the National Manpower Training Agency (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje --SENA*), literacy training, and agricultural schooling.⁴⁸

However, military efforts to intervene the causes of the violence, usually are not tolerated by the political country, and disagreement with government policies have cost the careers to some brilliant Officers.

In the counter-insurgency war the Armed Forces had gain support from the government, to independently develop their own military strategy against the subversion, the selection of commands, and the development of internal policies. The experience of the Colombian Armed Forces in guerrilla warfare is one of the highest in the world. The operational version of this doctrine originally develop from General Alberto Ruiz's "Plan

ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, 1991, p. 181.

⁴⁷ Ramsey, Russell, *Guerrilleros y Soldados*, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogota, 1981, p. 182.

⁴⁸ Maullin, Richard, *Soldiers, Guerrillas and Politics in Colombia*, RAND Corporation, 1973, p. 69.

Lazo" in early 1960s⁴⁹, and with the updates from the present had been decisive in avoiding the spread of the guerrilla influence. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Armed Forces had also supported government policies dealing with peace efforts to finish the guerrilla.

3. Industry⁵⁰

By the end of 1981, the dominant elements of Colombian society were beginning to re-orient their policies to confront subversion. As it had in the past, subversion was becoming the method of choice for opposing governments who, in the eyes of many workers, had allied themselves with industry in working to defeat initiatives aimed at industrial reform. The capitalists of the industrial groups closely followed the progress of reform in the legislature, as well as the progress of anti-insurgent efforts across the country.

a. Structural Elements

The industrial groups of interest are endowed with vast resources, including publication enterprises, and are capable of economic and political analysis. They have historically been natural critics of the executive branch. They have few relations with the Congress -- except the farmer's and cattle industry associations -- because Congress is interested in clientship practices, and so are not able to affect the economic policies and public investment. Such groups are careful to be discreet about the details of their financial relations with the government, but the involvement of some industrial

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 69.

⁵⁰ Chronological information on industrialist groups is based on *Gremios Industriales ante la Crisis*, Kalmanovitz, Salomon, 1989.

organizations in decisions regarding disposition of industry-based public revenues is well known. That is the case, for example, for the Coffee Federation, which invests export taxes in public works projects in coffee producing areas.⁵¹ Today, however, the system is more decentralized. Local governments are able to devote more of their budgets to public investment, and now the various industrial groups must have better relations with administration at the local level.

b. Relations with the Government after the National Front

During the years of the National Front, industry was progressing systematically, arriving at 14.8% of the GNP by the end of the period. Between 1968 and 1974, the annual growth rate was 8%, and industry was responsible for 22.9% of GNP.⁵² At that time, optimism was evident in the country, and Fabio Correa, the president of the National Association of Industrialists (*Asociación Nacional de Industriales* --ANDI), affirmed publicly that the climate of peace and prosperity had been created during the National Front, and could be the model for future economic realizations. Subsequent economic development was turbulent, however, and the various social issues that arose were hard to resolve, especially without major political and institutional changes.

The reforms made during the government of Alfonso López Michelsen were an effort to liberalize the accumulation of capital, reduce financial restrictions, and increase foreign commerce. After his presidency, analysts suggest that there was a moral decomposition and an industrial involution. Daniel Pecaú said the following:

⁵¹ Urrutia, Miguel, *Gremios, Política Económica y Democracia*, Fedesarrollo, Bogotá, 1981.
⁵² Correa, Fabio, *Evolución Industrial Durante los Gobiernos del Frente Nacional*, Medellín, 1974.

The rapid increase in the price of coffee since 1975, and the apogee of exports -- including drug trafficking -- had put in doubt the capacity of the Colombian State to channel in a productive way the unexpected abundance and avoid negative consequences in income distribution.⁵³

By the early 1980's, opposition to the government had become general. The situation deteriorated further: the economy was in recession, with high inflation, high interest rates and a growing deficit.⁵⁴ The industrial groups were extremely critical of economic policies and the government in general. In February 1981, several groups, including the ANDI, CAMACOL (Construction), FENALCO (Commerce) and ANIF (Finance), joined together to condemn the government and its actions. They demanded a "global reorientation" of economic policy in order to return to protectionism and a finance system that favored capital accumulation. Another sore point for these groups were the measures that permitted the development of black markets, which had, in their view, carried the productive sector to the brink of bankruptcy. At this time, marihuana trafficking was in apogee, and cocaine trafficking was just over the horizon. However, a general strike in 1981 again forced the government and the industrial groups to reconcile, and together they neutralized the efforts of the unions.

c. The Peace Talks

In 1982, most of the country was talking about peace with the guerrilla organizations. At the end of 1981, the ANDI began a campaign advancing the idea that peace must be a national objective, and offering support to all initiatives that contributed

⁵³ Pecaut, Daniel, *Crónica de dos Décadas de Política Colombiana*, Siglo XXI editores, Bogota, 1989, p. 247.

⁵⁴ Pecaut, Daniel, *Crónica de dos Décadas de Política Colombiana*, Siglo XXI editores, Bogota, 1989, p. 320.

to peace. In May of that year, Belisario Betancourt received the highest number of votes ever in a presidential election.

At that moment the different groups were focusing their efforts on exalting the new president and his government's programs. The ANDI was convinced that the style of this president was a good reason to be optimistic. In this environment, when the president launched his efforts toward national reconciliation, the different groups kept silent, focused instead on economic issues. In November 1982, the groups asked for an economic amnesty to face the coming recession, one of the hardest in the country's history.

In 1983, at the same time when the ANDI publicly supported the peace initiatives, ability of the government to create the appropriate atmosphere for its development was questioned. The people in general were worried about the negative response of the guerrilla groups. The agricultural industry was clearly in a crisis, and rural investment was low due to guerrilla activities in those areas. The ANDI viewed elimination of the illegal farming and rural unemployment as possible only after the guerrilla problem had been resolved. At that moment, the narcotics trafficking industry was consolidating and introducing \$2 billion US dollars per year into the country, but narcotics traffickers were considered a minor problem when compared with guerrilla activities.⁵⁵

In 1984, the ANDI supported the agreements between the government and FARC and M-19. At that time their greatest concern was the condition of the economy.

⁵⁵ Kalmanovitz, Salomon, *Economia del Narcotrafico en Colombia*, Bogota, 1990.

Foreign investment had stagnated, foreign debt and the deficit were growing, and industrial development was very low. In October, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) asked the government for drastic adjustments if the country was expecting more loans. The response of the industrial groups was immediate; they considered the autonomy of the country in jeopardy, and felt that the national interest demanded long and painful measures to recuperate the economy.

Economic difficulties began to diminish, the support of the industrial groups for the government. Their position on peace was articulated by ACOPI (Colombian Association of Little Industrialists): "We want peace, but not at any price, not giving up sovereignty and the law." By 1985, the ANDI was publicly highlighting its concerns about the national security, and their advertising against the communist threat posed by the guerrillas increased. ANDI supports the governments' response to M-19's takeover of the Palace of Justice in November, 1985.

In 1986 Virgilio Barco was elected president, and again the economic groups sent a supportive message, expressing their willingness to support the necessary economic measures to recover the economy. President Barco's characteristics changed the relationship between the president and the industrial groups. During the first stage of his government, the relations deteriorated, but the groups decided to wait for the appropriate moment to use their influence. In 1988, the government put out the so-called "statute for democracy," which included severe measures against narcotics-trafficking, guerrillas, terrorism, and organized crime. Barco asked the political parties, the economic

groups, the church and the media to join in this purpose and agree on global strategies. Once again, the government and the different industrial groups were again involved together in a peace process.

4. The Catholic Church

Colombia is an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country. The influence of the Church throughout Colombian history is present in every aspect of the national life. The tenacity of custom and the Church's traditional position as a moral and social arbiter ensured its continued presence in Colombian society. The parish church is still the center of small communities, and the local priest is often the major figure of authority and leadership. Approximately 95 percent of diocesan priests and 75 percent of priests belonging to religious orders are Colombians.⁵⁶ Since independence, all but four bishops have been Colombian.

Still today, there are formal relations with the Vatican through a Concordat. The existence of this agreement helped to mold the role of the church in the society. Maybe the most controversial aspects of this treaty are those related to the official status of the religion, the mission territories, education, and marriage. First, the church accepted Roman Catholicism as the religion of the great majority of Colombians, but agreed that other religions are accepted and treated the same. Second, the mission territories -- lands with Indian populations -- ceased to be enclaves where Catholic missionaries had greater jurisdiction than government; by agreement, the vast network of schools and social

⁵⁶ Bagley, Bruce, "The Society and its Environment", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1988, p. 112.

services were transferred to the government. Third, the Church surrendered its right to censor public education and enforce the use of the Catholic catechism in public schools. Finally, Colombians would be allowed to contract civil marriages without abjuring the Catholic faith. The civil validity of Catholic weddings is recognized, although all marriages were also to be recorded on the civil registry. Catholic marriages in the past could only be dissolved through arbitration in a church court; today there is acceptance of a civil procedure.

Colombia has changed a lot in the last 50 years. According to Malcom Deas, a British historian, expert in Colombian issues, "one of the biggest changes occurring for the Church was an accelerated secularization of society, which years ago was unimaginable." He also mentions urbanization and the growth of a new middle class, the crisis of the family institution, the new professional role of women, and administrative and economic corruption. Other controversial changes are related to family planning and birth control, which have allowed the country to reduce the birth rate.

a. Changes Inside the Church

Due to changes in Colombian society beginning in the 1940s, the church had been involved in activities such as social welfare (communal action) and union organization. During the National Front, the role of the church as a supporter of the Conservative party was finished.⁵⁷ Of equal importance was the process of renewal that characterized the worldwide Roman Catholic Church in the early 1960s. Both Pope John

⁵⁷ Gonzales, Fernan, "La Iglesia Jerarquica", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 229.

XXIII and Pope Paul VI issued a series of encyclicals that were unequaled in their efforts to modernize the church as an institution and modify its role in society. These encyclicals stressed the government's obligation to reduce socioeconomic inequalities and the church's obligation to take a leading role in reform. However, the majority of the Colombian clergy were surprised by these reforms. Some of them did not support freedom of religion, and only superficially accepted the new ideas.

Although the Papal encyclicals pointed the Colombian episcopate in the direction of change, it was not until the 1968 Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM) in Medellin that these proposed reforms were delivered in the form of a declaration specifically involving Latin America. However, the difficulty of synthesizing a single position on Latin America became apparent when, unlike other Latin American bishops, the Colombian bishops shied away from some of the more dramatic aspects of the Medellin conclusions. They did not for example, accept the conference's conclusion that institutionalized violence characterized Latin America societies, maintaining that this conclusion was primarily informed by the viewpoint of bishops from the Southern Cone countries, and was not appropriate to the situation in Colombia, nor to several other Latin American nations. Unable to change the shape of Medellin documents, the Colombian bishops published a dissenting treatise in the secular press.

b. Social and Political Influence of the Church

The bishops' inability to agree on an approach to social reform and to implement it through strong and effective leadership increased the fragmentation within

the church in Colombia, and the general controversy surrounding the Church's role in Society. Some of the problems developed over organizational, rather than ideological, disagreements between groups fighting for the same resources or powerful positions. Consequently, only development programs operating in strongly Catholic areas had substantial success.

Some of the modern priests, influenced by the new ideas of the Church, became involved with leftist groups in a dialogue for which they were not ready. Their lack of knowledge in social sciences lead them to over-value the Marxist theories. Some of them began to part from the guidance of the ecclesiastic hierarchy.

Frustration over the lack of dynamic leadership caused some priests to strike out in their own. The first to do so was Camilo Torres Restrepo. He initially represented an intent to enter a of dialogue with the university world, the social sciences, and a society he considered unfair. He soon became more radical, insisting that Christian love, to be effective, needed to be converted to science, politics, and even political violence. According to his ideas, the revolution was necessary to achieve the effective love demanded in his faith. Torres was killed in 1966, less than six months after he joined the National Liberation Army (ELN), thus becoming the first so-called martyr of the communist revolutionary movement.⁵⁸

In the late 1960s, many Colombian clergymen, encouraged by Torres' example, were determined to work for social change. Except for Gerardo Valencia Cano,

⁵⁸ Gonzales, Fernan, "La Iglesia Jerarquica", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 240.

Bishop of Buenaventura, none of the episcopate supported this work. In spite of the rejections of the Medellin conclusions by the majority of Colombian bishops, the activists led by Bishop Valencia became the first group in Latin America to issue a manifesto and a platform for social reform based on the resolutions of the Medellin conference. Meeting in 1968, and taking the name "Golconda" -- after the farmhouse in Viota (Cundinamarca) where they first met -- the group led the revolutionary wing of the Colombian church until early 1970. The Golconda group became involved in political as well as social issues, but their advocacy of violence caused many Colombians to turn away, and after a government campaign against them -- some were imprisoned -- and the death of Bishop Valencia, the group ceased to exist. Despite the fact that their efforts to effect sweeping social changes were not successful, members of the Golconda group came to be considered forerunners of the controversial "Liberation Theology Movement" among Catholic clergy elsewhere in the western hemisphere.⁵⁹

The lack of active commitment on the part of the bishops had several effects. On one hand, the weakness of the hierarchy's approval and/or disapproval of radical clergy led to confusion in the public interpretation of Catholic social ideology among Colombians. Additionally, the lack of protection against government repression convinced many that the official church was not genuinely interested in change. Finally, the national effort towards socio-economic development was hampered because, without consensus, the impact of the church on reform remained piecemeal.

⁵⁹ Bagley, Bruce, "The Society and its Environment", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1988, p. 117.

The one way in which the church may have been politically important was in upholding the legitimacy and survival of Colombia's oligarchic democracy, against many predictions and in contrast to the politics of many other countries. It came to this position in the mid 1950s, after having been long divided over identification with the conservative party. The spectacle of "La Violencia" and perceived affronts of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla led the church hierarchy to endorse his overthrow and the subsequent inauguration of the National Front.

According to some analysts, the low profile of the church in Colombian life is due to its inability to behave as a monolithic and homogenous body.⁶⁰ It is necessary to differentiate between the diocesan clergy and the religious clergy, which positions tend to be opposed very frequently. Even in the bishopric itself there are hierarchies who belong to pre-modern sectors, while others are modern-conservatives and still others are progress-conservatives, some of which are close to liberationist sectors of the clergy.

5. Workers and The Labor Movement

In the modern world, unions are social phenomena with legal status. In Colombia, despite various worker mobilizations throughout its history, there was never an assimilation of organized labor into the national political culture. The unions have been criticized by analysts for their inability to develop effective representation for the Colombian worker.⁶¹ They are usually recognized, but their legal, illegal, and political obstacles have been greater.

⁶⁰ Gonzales, Fernan, "La Iglesia Jerarquica", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 266.

⁶¹ Botero, Rocio, "Problemas Laborales y Reestructuración del Sindicalismo", in *Al Filo del*

The history of militant confrontation in the Colombian labor movements is not very long. The main exception was in 1920, when Colombia experienced sustained, violent labor revolts, including strikes against the United Fruit Company. In addition to being moderate, fragmented, and closely allied with the traditional parties or the Roman Catholic Church, the labor movement never accounted for more than one-third of the organized labor force, which itself represented only about one-fifth of the total labor force.

In the present, analysts consider that the labor movement is increasing its dynamism and transforming its political self-image.⁶² Fragmented not long ago between bipartisan and revolutionary organizations, there now exist alliances across union boundaries.

Analysis of economic indicators shows that there has been a clear economic reactivation though the consequences to labor are still not clear since 1986. It seems that this reactivation implies an important decrease in unemployment, due to the fact that more work is being made available. Also, the proportion of workers earning less than the minimum salary has a diminishing tendency, and there are more workers covered by the minimum salary, and annual adjustments for inflation (see Table I). However, the real salary of private employees has been declining, and in 1987 the accumulated reduction amounted to 10.2%.⁶³ Government salaries have been somewhat more stable.

Caos, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 275.

⁶² Ibid, p. 278.

⁶³ Economic Sciences Faculty of Antioquia University, "Perfil de Coyuntura Económica", in *Revista Economía Colombiana* # 4, Contraloría General de la República, 1988.

TABLE I. MINIMUM SALARY ANNUAL NEGOTIATION PROCESS.

Year of negotiation	Year increase is effective	Government proposals (*)	Proposal economic groups (**)	Proposal Unions	Inflation rate year	Decided Adjustment	Type of Decision
1984	1985	16-17%	N.P.	+26%	18.3%	20%	Concert
1985	1986	24%	22%	30%	22.7%	24%	Concert
1986	1987	17%	N.P.	30%	20.5%	22%	Concert
1987	1988	22%	24.5%	26%	24.0%	25%	No Concert
1988	1989	26.5%	N.I.	33%	28.12%	27%	No Concert
1989	1990	19%	N.I.		26.12%	26%	No Concert
Source : Records National Council for labor and salaries. (*) Final proposal. In 1985 was an average from Union proposal and inflation rate. (**) N.P.= No proposal N.I. = No information, due to private characteristics of sessions.							

There are also continuing problems related to employee benefits. First, social security only covers 30% of the workers, and has finance and administrative problems.⁶⁴ Second, problems of noncompliance with labor laws continue to be widespread (see Table II). Third, subcontracts and temporary jobs are considered a threat to job security, and are considered by the unions method of avoiding payment of employee benefits. Fourth, the legal and political limitations of the unions, and their concentration in medium and big industries, limits their impact in moments of negotiation.

⁶⁴ Botero, Rocio, "Problemas Laborales y Reestructuración del Sindicalismo", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 282.

TABLE II. COMPLIANCE AND INFRACTION OF LABOR REGULATIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS VISITED BY THE MINISTRY OF WORK.

Year	Organizations visited (#)	Organizations that comply	Organizations that violate at least 1 norm	Number of infringed norms	Average
1982	1,414	206 (14.6%)	1,208 (85.4%)	4,377	3.62
1983	3,450	542 (15.7%)	2,908 (84.3%)	9,963	3.42
1984	3,325	153 (4.6%)	3,172 (95.4%)	11,443	3.6
1985	4,263	145 (3.4%)	4,118 (96.6%)	18,141	4.4
1986	2,386	153 (6.5%)	2,233 (93.5%)	7,445	3.33
1987	2,695	957 (35.5%)	1,738 (64.5%)	9,876	5.68
1988	1,262	604 (47.9%)	658 (52.1%)	3,786	5.75
Source : Ministry of Work. Planning office, pamphlets 28 to 39.					

There is no accurate data regarding the distribution of the labor force in unions, but the approximate proportions are: CUT (Corporación Unitaria de Trabajadores) 65%, CTDC (Confederación de Trabajadores Democráticos) 20%, CGT (Corporación general de Trabajadores) 6%, CTC (Corporación de Trabajadores Colombianos) 4%, and Independent unions, 5%. However, in 1988, only an estimated 12% of Colombia's economically active population was unionized (see Figure 2).⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Botero, Rocio, "Problemas Laborales y Reestructuración del Sindicalismo", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 289.

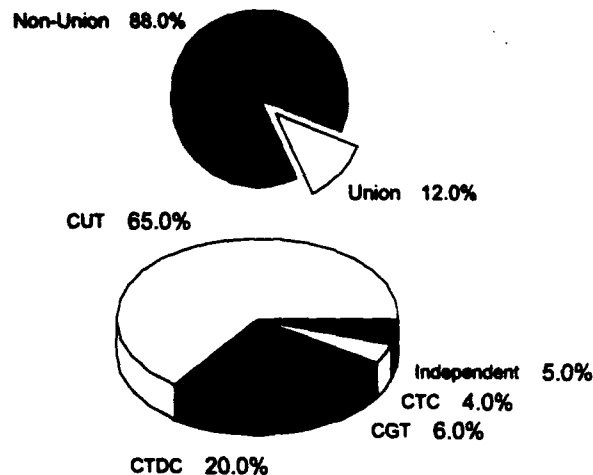


Figure 2. Union Membership and Distribution.

Despite the small percentage of union membership, for several observers, it is clear that there is no "labor peace" in Colombia. This is probably due to the fact that the membership of unions is so small that it is difficult to achieve recognition, much less response to demands, through negotiation. Consequently, the few voices that are raised in support of labor issues are always loud, and sometimes agitate for violence. Even so, there has been little improvement in worker's welfare. There is a visible social and labor unrest, because of the accumulation of problems, postponement of solutions, and the lack of a modern policy for management-labor relations. The last ten years have been replete

with strikes in the banana, banking, cement, public services, telecommunications, and other industries. The unions have no official connections with the guerrillas. However, some union members voluntarily help insurgents, and share their philosophies.

Various guerrilla groups have taken advantage of sympathizers among the labor unions to stage terrorists attacks in conjunction with union events such as strikes. While such terrorist activity occurs without the official authorization or endorsement of the union leadership, right-wing extremists have assassinated union leaders in revenge for such attacks.

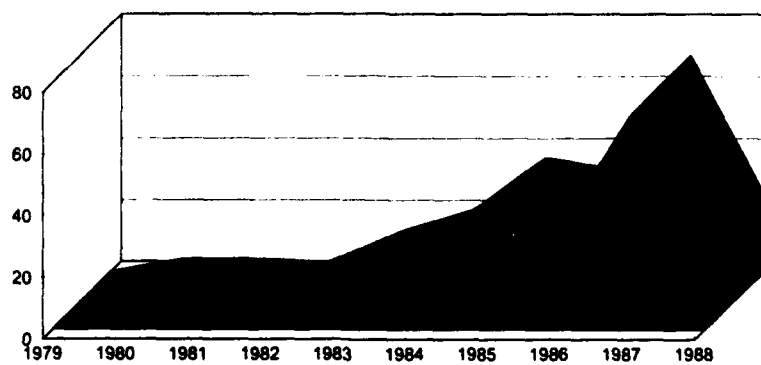
Recently, demands from the labor union have included protection for its leaders, and the more traditional focus of cost-of-living adjustments for wages.

6. The Rural Population

In Colombia, the decade of the 1980s was characterized by extensive popular protest. The rebirth of rural belligerency, contrasted the calmness experienced in the 1970s. Several rural organizations organized marches to the cities to demand reform (see Table III). Large landowners wanted more favorable conditions for their expansion; small land-owners asked for defense of their position in the market; and peasants without land wanted their own parcels. Even though their demands were different, in general all converged on the defense and promotion of agriculture in rural areas. Through the years, the system forced them to massive protests demanding direct negotiations on problems areas.

TABLE III. DIFFERENT AGRARIAN MOBILIZATIONS

Year	(A) Claims for land	(B) Specific rural problems	(C) Salaries and work conditions	(D) Demand for Infrastructure	(E) Protests against repression	(F) Combination (D) and (E)	TOTALS
1979	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1980	1	2	-	-	1	-	4
1981	1	2	-	1	-	-	4
1982	-	1	-	1	1	-	3
1983	3	6	-	1	-	3	13
1984	10	4	-	1	4	1	20
1985	12	4	1	9	4	7	37
1986	10	4	-	4	5	10	33
1987	28	2	2	12	7	19	70
1988	3	2	-	7	3	11	26
TOTAL	68	27	3	36	25	51	210

**Figure 3. Agrarian Mobilizations, 1979-1988.**

The evolution of this situation parallels the failure of the National Front. When it began in 1958, more than the half of the Colombian population was in the rural areas. Because they were the principal victims of the violence, it was expected that the traditional parties would give them priority. But the National Front was incapable of implementing the shortened "Law of Agrarian Reform" approved in 1961. Beginning the 1970s, some of the rural population allied with guerrilla groups, to seize land and force a marginal redistribution; but this activity was actively repressed, and there was a dismantling of any legal framework for reform. Only coffee growers emerged with any measure of support. Other programs, such as DRI (Rural Integrated Development) have had moderate success.

Even under adverse conditions, the rural population showed an enormous capacity for resistance. Today, as in 1960, around 1.3 million rural families use one third of the useful agricultural land of the country.⁶⁶ Even though the absolute amount of rural inhabitants stays the same, migration to the cities has changed the proportions of the country's population -- from 40% urban population in the 1950s to 70% in the 1980s.⁶⁷ Also, traditional rural farming was replaced by larger commercial operations at a rate that reduced it's proportion of agricultural production from two thirds in the 1970s to less than one third in the 1980s. This was not merely an effect of differential efficiency; in large

⁶⁶ Comité Interamericano para el Desarrollo Agropecuario (CIDA), *Colombia: Tenencia de la Tierra y Desarrollo Socioeconómico del Sector Agropecuario*, Washington, 1966, pp. 72, 116, 133.

⁶⁷ Bagley, Bruce, "The Society and its Environment", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1988, p. 96.

measure it is the result of policies and financing which favor production technology over traditional rural agriculture.

In addition to demands for land, markets, health, education and other services, Colombian rural mobilizations have uniformly pressed for more political democracy to the rural areas. Over the years, they have developed a capacity to organize and secure changes in policy.⁶⁸ This peaceful solution became more useful than supporting guerrillas which only brought violent consequences. This shift in the perceived costs and benefits of the two approaches caused the great majority of "*campesinos*", prefer to be united and look for dialogue with the government to achieve solutions to their problems. However, even with this power, the rural presence in the national political arena is still weak.

7. The Civic Movements

Since 1957, strikes and the number of civic protests in Colombia have increased. The "national strike" of that year and the Pinilla dictatorship showed the potential of this method of expressing dissatisfaction. The populations of smaller Colombian towns were quick to learn the power of paralysis, employing civic strikes, which were intended to bring all activity in a town or district to a standstill, to highlight their concerns and demand social services.

From 1958 to 1966 there were 16 civic strikes. In the government of Lleras Restrepo (1966-1970), there were no strikes. In the next 10 years, from 1971 to 1981, urban protest grew: there were 138 civic strikes, averaging more than 13 per year. Of

⁶⁸ Zamosc, Leon, "El Campesinado y las Perspectivas para la Democracia Rural", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 368.

those strikes, two were national: in 1977 and 1981. From 1982 to 1989, there were 218 strikes, averaging more than 30 per year.⁶⁹

The increase in mobilization and social protests goes together with another phenomenon: the emergence of national meetings of different popular organizations, and the formation of civic movements and regional political movements. For example, in 1979 a Christian group (CEB) was formed; in 1982 an Indian movement (ONIC); in 1983 several groups joined in the National Coordinator of Civic Movements (CNMC). In 1985, a group for popular housing (CONAVIP) was created; and the second meeting of the CNMC was held.⁷⁰

Even though the civic movements were in the social arena, they helped to create regional political movements. Independent from the traditional parties, these movements tried to bring to social protest the political expression it previously lacked. This phenomenon marks a historic break with the traditional dependence of most of the groups on the traditional political parties, and gives them a source of unity and power. By 1987, thirteen of these groups operated nation-wide.

The main motivations of these movements are:⁷¹

- ♦ Demand for Infrastructure -- from this perspective, civic protest is linked to a central motive; the dissatisfaction of large social sectors with low quality, high cost,

⁶⁹ Restrepo, Luis, "Movimientos Civicos en la Decada de los Ochentas", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 383.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 384.

⁷¹ Henao, Juana, *El Movimiento Civico en Colombia*, University of Antioquia, 1989, pp. 47-50.

or the complete lack of public services, particularly water, energy, sewing, communications, fuels, trash collection, and roads.

- ♦ Unequal Development of the Regions -- due to the concentration of investment, production capacity, and work force in certain regions. The cities are better off than the rural areas, and some cities are more developed than others.
- ♦ The Neoliberal Model: since 1970, the leading economic sectors are looking for a bigger role in the world market. This benefits the economy, but social investment is reduced in favor of capital investments.
- ♦ Macroeconomic Policies: In times of economic crisis, the capacity of the government to respond to the demands of the people is reduced. Attempts to solve the economic problems can cause other problems. For example, subsidies and government expenditures are reduced; the tariffs are increased.
- ♦ Centralization: The centralization of the state contributes to the municipal crisis. Resources go to the state to the detriment of the local revenues. The tendency is to determine allocations in accordance with the population, but this is not enough and the small towns are at a clear disadvantage.
- ♦ Right to Life -- this new motive has been taken by the civic movements and represents their desire to live free of violence.

Between 1987 and 1988 there was a fleeting convergence between social and guerrilla movements. This was initiated by the guerrillas, who were looking for new areas of operations and seeking to end their political isolation.⁷² This forced generated an

⁷² Restrepo, Luis, "Movimientos Civicos en la Decada de los Ochentas", in *Al Filo del Caos*,

increase in social mobilizations, but the level of fighting did not correspond to any development of the groups, or increase in their power.

Since 1988 tensions have appeared between the original activists of the civic movements, who were loyal to the basic aspirations of social welfare, and representatives of subversive organizations who had infiltrated the movements as a means of increasing their power. The groups found themselves involved in projects which were not their own, and engaged in conflicts for which they were not prepared and in which they were not even interested. Here began the divisions and disintegration of the coordinators. In October 1987 a new national strike was organized, but it was unsuccessful, as the people were indifferent. Only a few of these movements maintained their autonomy and managed the conversion to a regional political organization with some success.

8. Bandits and Narcotics Traffickers

Throughout Colombian history, periods of political violence have been accompanied by increases in the level of general violence and banditry. The Colombian bandit has consistently pursued personal wealth in a variety of forms, from food and cattle to gold, cash, and modern consumer products and automobiles. His stake in political violence is defined by the opportunity to take violent action in pursuit of personal goals without fear of legal consequences. This opportunity is present every time political violence occurs, and is usually indistinguishable in an atmosphere of generalized violence. The bandit has evolved throughout Colombian history, yet one of his more modern manifestations is made unique by the scale of the personal benefit derived.

Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 401.

The Colombian narcotics trafficker is a stakeholder in insurgency by virtue of the fact that he is either ally or enemy of the guerrilla. The Colombian drug cartels represent some of the most powerful and unmerciful enemies of the country. Although Colombia, a country with 30 million inhabitants, is relatively a small producer of coca, the Cartels control 80% or more of the world traffic in cocaine, with an annual estimated income between \$2 and \$4 billion US dollars.⁷³ The money produced is an obvious factor that in generating instability in the legal institutions. For many people it is clear that the drug lords are interested in controlling the traditional elites (through intimidation and corruption), which creates a serious threat to the country's democratic institutions.

The relationship between drug traffickers and subversion is varied and complex. On one side, there is evidence that the cartels have supported right wing private militias, to control the rural areas through the development of "dirty wars" against the guerrillas and their followers. The result has been extreme violence in some areas of the Magdalena Valley and the eastern plains, putting in jeopardy the ability of the state to protect human rights and introduce development programs.

This war originated when the narcotics traffickers began to buy land in areas of guerrilla influence, and were subjected to guerrilla extortion and kidnapping. Because of the inability of the legal authority to fully protect them, and using the finance capacity of their illegal business, they joined with other people in the areas to create private militias to "clean the area" and protect them against the guerrillas. This partnership generated

⁷³ Bagley, Bruce, "Narcotrafico: Colombia Asediada," in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, F., ed., Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1991, p. 445.

self-defense groups such as MAS (Muerte a Secuestradores - Death to Kidnappers) in Puerto Boyaca, which was responsible for several massacres in the middle Magdalena. In 1984, the ACDEGAM (Association of Farmers and Cattlemen of the Middle Magdalena), who coordinated some of these self-defense groups, and also engaged in other civic and even political activities. The association consolidated its control of the Liberal party in an area not long ago controlled by communists, and created an illegal military school to train its members.⁷⁴

Ironically, although it is evident that narcotics trafficking has impeded the development of rural reforms made by the state, the drug business also generates work and improves the income of thousands of rural people. The business has also responded to local demands for infrastructure, building schools and low income housing. The recipients of such gifts generally become loyal allies of the drug lords.

At the same time, the guerrilla has recognized the potential of the business, and has increased participation in the farming and trafficking of cocaine. This is especially true of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). At the beginning of the 1980s, some guerrilla groups gave protected to cartel areas, exchanging the protection for money and weapons. However, in the past few years, the cooperation seems to have ended, and now both sustain a war to control the land and people of coca farming and refining areas.

⁷⁴ Bagley, Bruce, "Narcotrafico: Colombia Asediada" in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Tercer Mundo Editores, Bogota, 1991, p. 455.

C. SUMMARY

By the late 1980s, all of the stakeholders in insurgency had a common characteristic: the cost of continuing political violence had become greater than the benefits to be obtained. For the political parties, the cost-benefit approach meant that political violence impeded their access to potential voters, and that there was political opportunity in bringing the guerrilla membership back to national life. The military had realized that continued focus on internal security was at the expense of external security considerations, and that the continual oscillation between dialog and violence was an end game that held no advantage. Industry was aware that further development, which capitalists translated into further profit, was contingent on a permanent solution to political violence directed against commercial enterprise. The Catholic Church, struggling to reconcile the present social demands of modernization to the historical requirements of tradition, was willing to lend its voice to the plea for an end to violence. The demands of labor, rural populations, and the various civic movements were increasingly seen to be more readily achievable at lower cost through political, rather than politically violent, means. The bandit now must confront the possibility of having to operate in a much more open environment, and must necessarily reevaluate the benefit to be derived from continued violent action. The narcotics trafficker is also reviewing the means available to maintain the level of prosperity. Manual Marulanda Velez, however, remained unconvinced that the violent pursuit of political objectives in Colombia should

be made a thing of the past. In early 1987, in lived in an "inhospitable and difficult to approach hamlet" in the department of Meta, and vowed to continue the struggle.

IV. THE ECONOMICS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The present chapter intent to present some of the relations between the economy and the political violence. For this purpose, the first part of the chapter is an effort to explain with the help of economic theories, some of the causes of the insurgency. The second part will analyze the Colombian macroeconomic performance and policies, to see their relations with this violence. This is followed by a section on finance methods of the various guerrilla groups, and the chapter concludes with an examination of the economic costs of political violence.

A. ECONOMY AND POLITICS

Wilber Albert Chaffee, states that every day the relationship between economics and political change becomes more obvious.⁷⁵ Studies tie economics and politics together in a framework of *political economy* that involves important questions about resource allocation.

The following analysis will try to discuss in general terms, the economic theory of public goods, and their intimate connection to politics.⁷⁶ The concept of politicians as profit-maximizing entrepreneurs will be developed and contrasted with the motives of

⁷⁵ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Buchanan, James M., *The Demand and Supply of Public Goods*, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1968, p. 9.

other people who decide to involve themselves in politics. The concept is similar to that of the business entrepreneur, but involves the production and distribution of public goods. Additionally, the concept of competition for position and profit among different politicians and parties is discussed. Finally, the motives of individuals in politics will be considered -- specifically the reasons behind their decision to join a revolution, support an incumbent government, or stay neutral. This section is intended to relate political culture political economic theory, viewing politics as a form of economics, rather than using economic reasoning to understand politics.

1. Political Economy

Among the social scientific theories currently in use, there is a shared central assumption: Human behavior is rational, in that a person can order a complete (exhaustive) list of preferences in such a way as to maximize his or her own self interest and, if given a choice, will choose that preference which maximizes his gains. Furthermore, a rational person will obtain as much of his preferred choice as he can.⁷⁷

Based on the prior assumption, James Buchanan stated the following:⁷⁸

Political science, then, becomes a study of how individuals make political choices, and what the logical consequences of those choices are. Political behavior parallels economic behavior in terms of the exchange of goods and services in return for compensation. The differences between economics and politics lie in the types of goods and services and of the medium and method of compensation. In general, economic studies markets, and the production and supply of private goods;

⁷⁷ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Buchanan, James M., *The Demand and Supply of Public Goods*, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1968, p. 9. Note: Buchanan represents the "rational choice" school of thought in political science.

while politics studies the production, supply, and payment for collective or public goods.

2. Collective Goods

Political competition, including the use of violence, is intimately tied to the question of demand and supply of collective goods. Collective goods are those goods which, if supplied to one individual, cannot be withheld from all other individuals within a society⁷⁹. Since a collective good once supplied to one person is freely available to all, there is no incentive to pay for the good, creating what is called the "free-rider" problem. The mechanism used by governments to eliminate this problem is taxation. Conceptually, "politics began when a community of individuals decided to demand goods and services publicly through governmental/political processes, rather than privately, precisely because the bilateral exchanges facilitated by market arrangements are insufficiently inclusive."⁸⁰

3. Political Entrepreneurship

The political entrepreneur is a person or organized group of persons who seek profit from the production and supply of public goods.⁸¹ To obtain profit, the entrepreneur, after determining the level of demand required to secure the public good, will supply that good to the consumers for less in production costs than he can collect back in the form of revenues. An excellent example of the political entrepreneur in Latin

⁷⁹ Samuelson, Paul, "The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure", *Review of Economics and Statistics* #37, 1955, pp. 387-389.

⁸⁰ Buchanan, James M., *The Demand and Supply of Public Goods*, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1968, pp. 7-8.

⁸¹ Ibid.

America is the "*cacique*" (boss), who uses his leadership position to advance his own financial interests. Holding this position is contingent on his ability to supply public goods to his community in exchange for votes (clientelism), and to repress competitors who would seek to replace him. In Colombia another sign of political entrepreneurship, is the close relationship between the economic and political elites. During the first part of this century, merchants and agriculturist dominated the politics and lead the country according to their interests, and benefiting from public funds.

Other motivations considered by W.A. Chaffee include: security resulting in choices that heighten the probability of remaining in office; ambition -- the desire to go to the top of the political ladder; and the power and prestige associated with the membership in office -- useful for social mobility.

So far, entrepreneurship and economic gain have been used descriptively in the analysis of political behavior. A further step is to link these concepts to a theory of politics. A major advance in this direction was made by Merle Kling, with the hypothesis that:

political instability in much of Latin America has its basis in economic dominance, which closes off the opportunity for personal social advancement through economic activity and results in a pursuit of political office as a means of securing prestige, profit and power.⁸²

One of the examples used by Chaffee is the frustration of university graduates who can not be absorbed by the economy. Their opportunities for subsequent economic

⁸² Kling, Merle, *Towards a theory of Power and Political Instability in Latin America*, Western Political, 1956, pp. 21-35.

advancement are limited, prompting many in this group to join leftist movements against the economic and politic elites.

In another approach, Hugh J Aitken concludes that

entrepreneurship is a characteristic of all organized human activity. . . you cannot talk about organization without talking about entrepreneurship as one aspect of it.⁸³

The importance of this concept lies in its value in constructing an explanation of revolution or the lack of revolution. After examining a number of hypothesis about revolution, D.E.H. Russell noted that none shows why there had not been a revolution in South Africa, prior to the end of apartheid. He concluded that organization is the key,

since the South African regime makes it virtually impossible for Africans to organize themselves into a revolutionary force, the organization thesis comes to be inseparable from the elitist thesis in this particular situation.⁸⁴

In a similar analysis of violence in Latin America, Martin Needler puts it simply: "the masses do not arise; they are aroused."⁸⁵ In Columbia, the degree to which the government allows revolutionary groups to organize determines the level that these movements can reach. The degree of power of the Colombian guerrilla organizations, has depended on the level of permissivity of the government through history. During periods of strong military action against the guerrillas, the groups have seen their structures diminished. Accordingly, when the political elites allow them to function, restricting

⁸³ Aitken, Hughe, *The Future of Entrepreneurial Research: Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Harvard University, 1963, p. 6.

⁸⁴ Russell, D.E.H., *Rebellion, Revolution, and Armed Force*, Academic Press, New York, 1974, p. 54. Note: Since Russell wrote, the situation in South Africa has changed dramatically, in part as a result of the development of unions and other coordinating organizations.

⁸⁵ Needler, Martin C., *Political Development in Latin America*, Random House, New York, 1968, p. 56.

official military actions, the guerrilla groups reorganize and strengthen their structures. Groups such as the FARC had even formed so called "independent republics" in the areas of Marquetalia, Rio Chiquito, Pato and Guayabero. These were destroyed during the Valencia administration in 1964. Later, the FARC were allowed to keep for several years another refuge in "Casa Verde" in the "La Uribe" Department of Meta, which served as center of operations and training, and was subsequently destroyed in December 1990.

According to Chaffee, a political entrepreneur able to organize collective action is the necessary catalyst for revolution. As discussed previously, individual charisma has always been one of the pillars of Colombian politics. This may in part, explain the proliferation of insurgent movements that have occurred in its history.

4. Political Competition

By combining the profit maximizing assumption of political entrepreneurship with microeconomic models of profit levels resulting from varying forms of economic competition, a theory of political competition can be developed. Political competition, as a form of economic behavior, is analogous to economic competition.⁸⁶

Insurrections occur when an incumbent government has monopolistic control over the supply of collective goods in a polity and represses the entry of alternative offers to supply these goods. In order to compete with a monopolistic incumbent, a prospective competitor must break the political monopoly.⁸⁷ The situation becomes a duopolistic

⁸⁶ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 54.

⁸⁷ North, Douglas C., *Structure and Change in Economic History*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1981, p. 27.

political competition in which the conflict is continued until one of the two competitors is eliminated from the polity. The winning competitor then has monopolistic political control. This series of situations results in a cycle of competitive type of politics, as shown in Figure 4.

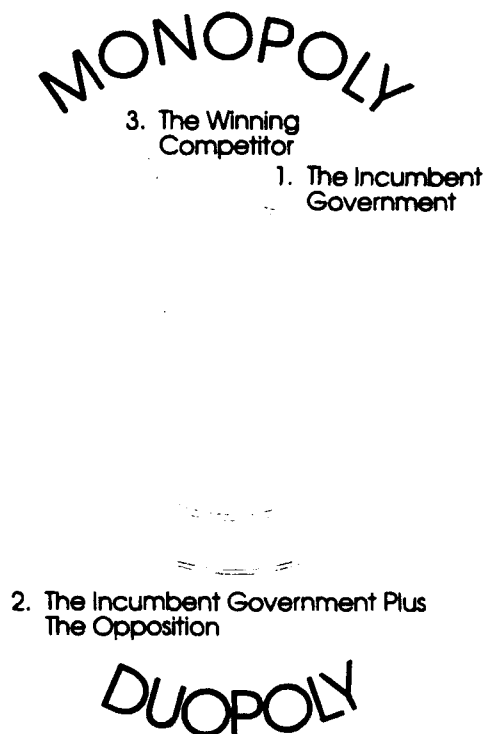


Figure 4. Cycle of Competitive Politics.

An example of this competitive sequence in Colombia is seen in the power struggle between the Liberal and Conservative parties. Even though there were some instances of collaboration, when interests were opposed, one party became the opposition seeking to replace the party in power. During the government of Laureano Gomez, his

pressure to keep the monopoly of the conservative party by force ultimately lead to a coalition of the opposition with the armed forces, a coup, and the installation of the government of Rojas Pinilla in 1953.

Political competition is also defined as the rivalry between two or more political entrepreneurs, each of whom wants the right to supply a package of collective goods to a society. There are several classes of collective goods.⁸⁸

- ♦ One type is the pure collective good of replacing an incumbent leader. This is a nondivisible, nonexclusionary good that can only be supplied in one quantity -- the incumbent is either replaced or not replaced.
- ♦ Other collective goods can be supplied in continuous quantities but are non-exclusively supplied. An example of this type of collective good is national defense, which can be supplied at different levels.
- ♦ Similarly there are varying levels of political and economic freedom; the lifting of repression is often a collective good offered by the leader of a revolution.
- ♦ Other goods are collectively supplied on an individual basis, such as land reform, where large pieces of land are divided up for the personal use of those who work the land. This is essentially the supply of private goods on a collective basis. The original private character of the good is then the reason for the failure of this kind of program in Colombia. Unless the incentives for the owners are likewise good, they will use political pressures to stop agrarian reform. The land issue was also a

⁸⁸ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, pp. 58-60.

motivator for insurgency when colonists in the 1960s allied with the guerrilla groups in order to protect their lands from expropriation by the government, after pressures by large land owners claiming ownership of those lands.

- ♦ Collective goods that are limited to one group, but collectively supplied to members of that group, are another type. An illustration of this situation is presented by the ELN, who argue that natural resources belong to the Colombian people and can not be sold to foreign companies. This is their main justification for attacking installations in the oil and mining industries.

Discontent is a necessary condition for revolution.⁸⁹ Discontent can be expressed as a demand, as a want. If the discontent is an aggregated demand for a change in the supply of collective goods, and if the demand is great enough, then the potential exists for making a profit by supplying those goods. But discontent is not a sufficient condition for revolution. If it were, then the prediction of revolution and political violence would be simpler. An example in the Caribbean is Haiti. Even though the vast majority of the populace lives on a marginal subsistence level, and the nation has the lowest national average per capita income in Latin America, the extreme oppression of the government has so far avoided a revolution.⁹⁰

Another area for political competition is a sustained duopoly. This is simply two-party competition between suppliers, each of which recognizes that its actions have a significant impact on the supply of a commodity. This is the simplest form of political or

⁸⁹ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The economics of violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 60.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 60.

economic competition. In the political arena, such competition can be expressed in a number of ways: two-partied electoral systems, civil wars, coups d'état, and revolution.

In the case of political duopoly, three forms of competition result:

- ♦ competition within a legal framework that limits yet divides profits between the competitors;
- ♦ competition in which the major supplier of collective goods allows a competitor as the least expensive form of maintaining near-monopoly profits, then allowing competition may be less costly than repression;
- ♦ violence in which competition is cutthroat, and has as its objective the elimination of competition.

The first form exists when there is a set of norms established by law and accepted by the competitors. The calculation by political entrepreneurs that profit can be best maximized by allowing political competition results in collusion. Competition can remain profitable only if there is some form of collusion, either explicit or implicit. Collusion guarantees the winner of a political competition a definite term in office, so that the changing offers of collective goods packages, do not turn an incumbent out of office every time a more valuable offer of political good is made. This prevents turning the leadership of government into a profitless enterprise, since it ensures a winning political entrepreneur sufficient time in office to make a profit, and helps to make those profits long term rather than short term.

One of the most dramatic examples of contractual collusion with the specific purpose of preventing profit loss by cutthroat political competition can be seen in the case of Colombia's National Front.⁹¹ Even though the majority was represented in both parties, small groups felt that the duopoly actually was a monopoly of the traditional parties. A situation with these characteristics existed when the ANAPO of Rojas Pinilla tried in 1970 to break that monopoly with public support. The narrow margin of votes generated accusations of fraud in some sectors, and were, in large measure, responsible for the formation of the revolutionary movement M-19. Some analysts think that the National Front solved the problem of institutionalized political violence between Liberals and Conservatives, but political violence was generated when the minority lost the supply of some collective goods, due to the lack of incentive for the traditional parties to distribute them, once the opposition had been reduced.⁹²

5. The Institutionalization of Political Entrepreneurship

The institutionalization of political competition, which is tied to political stability, is referred as "the creation of political institutions sufficiently adaptable, complex, autonomous, and coherent to absorb and to order the participation of different groups and to promote social and economic change."⁹³ One form of institutionalization of political competition is the creation of institutions of bureaucracy and modes of behavior that promote legalized competition. This development increases the cost of illegal

⁹¹ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 66.

⁹² Thoumi, Francisco E., "Políticas Económicas ante los Desafíos del Desarrollo", in *Al Filó del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, Ed., Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogotá, 1991, p. 126.

⁹³ Huntington, Samuel, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Princeton Press, 1988, p. 266.

violence, removes some of the profit taking of political competitors, and promotes cooperative competition. Institutionalization increases the government's ability to make continuing decisions about the production and supply of public goods in such a way that political entrepreneurs are limited in the profit they can extract; hence a strong, organized, and established bureaucracy with a non-political civil service limits the value, or profit, that can be gained through political competition by violence.

As important as governmental institutionalization is, a second form of institutionalization may be more important in the elimination of political competition through violence: the institutionalization of political entrepreneurship. Economically, this results in an exchange of short-term profits for long term gain, increasing the value of benefits supplied to the consumer and reducing the demand for a change of supplier. Politically, institutionalization means the shift of political entrepreneurship from the personal leadership of an innovative, risk-taking individual, to a collective, bureaucratized management group; an institutionalized political party. Competition is then between political parties rather than between candidates, increasing the possibility of democratic stability and decreasing the likelihood of revolution. These concepts can be formalized into the following hypothesis and corollaries:⁹⁴

- ♦ Institutionalized political entrepreneurship provides less costly channels for ambitious politicians to rise within the political arena, rather than by revolution.

⁹⁴ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 89.

- ♦ Institutionalization rotates politicians out of the system, opening up positions for younger politicians.
- ♦ More of the polity's demands are met through increased units of production when profit maximization is long term.

Proof that institutionalization increases the likelihood of maintaining a democratic system is the observed political stability of Colombia for more than 35 years. In Colombia, the traditional parties have existed for over one hundred years. Today, as a result of the constitution of 1991, minorities are allowed to participate and obtain gains from the system in pacific ways. The participation of reincorporated members of the guerrillas and minorities, such as the Indians, strengthens the Colombian democratic system.

6. Calculus of Revolutionary Participants

The rational person seeks to maximize his or her utility. If the person is a political entrepreneur, he or she seeks to maximize profit from the production and supply of collective goods. This section considers the rationality of individuals in an insurrectory situation, who must calculate what actions will most maximize their utility, or will benefit them most, in deciding whether to revolt or not.⁹⁵

The cost for an individual to join a revolt is very high, including his or her property, liberty, or even life. To make the choice, the individual calculates what personal utility he can expect from each of the competitors (government or guerrillas),

⁹⁵ Chaffee, Wilber Albert, *The Economics of Violence in Latin America*, Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 108.

what the cost would be of supporting each of them, and, discounting the costs of expected utility, supports the competitor whose programs offer him the most. If the cost exceeds the utility, the individual will abstain from giving support to one of the competitors.

Because the costs are very high, rationality implies that the individual with political motives and a perceived fair standard of living will exhaust legal channels before resorting to violence. Examples of this situation are the civic movements in Colombia; which have found in protests an effective means of gaining attention for their demands. With the opening of the democratic system, other stakeholders of polity have found more effective channels to express their problems and obtain collective goods than by pursuing revolution. This is why the guerrillas have been losing support over the years. When the government listens more to social claims and tries to solve problems, the people find it cheaper to obtain their needs through legal channels, especially if the government is firm in demanding non-violent action from those who expect change, and quick to respond in kind to the actions of those who choose a non-peaceful method of expressing their demands. However, there are still groups for which the benefits of revolution are greater than the costs. Some social problems remain unchanged, and affected persons perceive advantage in the guerrilla movements. Even though the likelihood of guerrilla groups rising to political power decreases everyday, the financial gains obtained through kidnapping, extortion, illegal drugs, and attacks on the economy are enough incentive to maintain guerrilla membership. The government, however, can further influence the

determination of perceived cost and benefit by increasing the coverage of social programs (benefit) and supporting military and legal action to counter the problem (cost).

B. THE COLOMBIAN ECONOMY

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, this part will attempt to determine the relationship between macroeconomic policies and insurgency, and how this could lead to a general crisis. For that purpose, first will be made a rapid profile of the Colombian macroeconomic performance, to place the country in a frame of reference. Secondly, the relationship between violence in the country and the economy will be discussed.

Colombia has been one of Latin America's few consistent economic performers during the debt crisis of the last decade. It is the only South American country without a single year of negative economic growth in 45 years. Curtailments in Public investment, as well as tight monetary and fiscal controls to reduce inflation, have been implemented in recent years with success. During the last decade, Colombian per capita income increased by 15%⁹⁶.

Despite political and drug-related violence, the country maintained growth and an essentially capitalist orientation. The government depends on entrepreneurial efforts and private capital (both foreign and domestic) as the sources of economic growth, and limits its domestic role to coordinating fiscal and monetary policies, providing for the public sector and infrastructure development, and establishing a political environment

⁹⁶ Hornbeck, J.F., "The Economy", in *Colombia: a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, Washington, 1988, p. 135.

conducive to investment and industrial development. Colombia's collective economic attributes define a middle-income developing country that has a strong and diverse resource base, as well as assorted production capabilities grounded in industry, manufacturing, agriculture, and various services. The present government and analysts predict that growth will continue, as will the reduction in inflation. The national unemployment rate for 1991 was 10%, and is presently under control, even falling in the big cities.⁹⁷ Other key economic and trade statistics at the beginning of the decade are presented in Tables IV , V, and VI.

However, despite many positive aspects, other problems remained. First, despite improvement, Colombia continues to have a highly skewed distribution of income and a relatively low per capita income. Indeed, in the late 1980s, the economy appeared to become even more concentrated, with the rewards of production remaining predominantly in the hands of the minority. Second, inflation, though seemingly under control, remains high. The same is true of the unemployment rate. Finally, the infamous drug trade is affecting the economy, resulting in inflation and an underground economy.

⁹⁷ *Colombian Economic Facts*, Colombian Embassy, Washington, 1992.

TABLE IV. COLOMBIAN ECONOMIC INDICATORS.

Gross Product (1991)	\$ 43.5 billion
Per Capita Income (1991)	\$ 1,295 (a year)
Total debt (1991)	\$ 17.5 billion
Debt as a % of Gross Product (1991)	40.2%
Merchandise Exports (1991)	\$ 7.28 billion
Merchandise Imports (1991)	\$ 5.10 billion
Trade Balance (1991)	+ \$2.18 billion
Major Exports (1990)	Oil (27.5%), Coffee (19.7%), Coal (7.7%)
Leading Export Markets (1990)	US (45%), Germany (12.1%), Japan (5.3%)
Major Imports (1990)	Intermediate Goods (46.3%)
	Capital Goods (37.4%)
	Fuel & Lubricants (6.1%)
Major Import Markets (1990)	US (36.3%), Japan (7%), Germany (7%)
Labor Force (1990)	Services (39%)
	Agriculture (29%), Manufacturing (14%)
Source : The National Planning Department, DNP.	

TABLE V. OTHER COMPARATIVE INDICATORS

	1950	1991
Life Expectancy (Yrs)	50	69
Population Growth (%)	4	2
Infant Mortality (per 1000)	112	41
Illiteracy (%)	40	10
Population (Million)	10	32
Urban Population (%)	30	70
Electricity (kW / Capita)	20	285
Source : The National Planning Department, DNP.		

**TABLE VI. ECONOMIC GROWTH (1980-1990) AND INFLATION RATE
(1983-1991).**

COUNTRY	ECONOMIC GROWTH (1980-1990)	INFLATION RATE (1983-1991)
COLOMBIA	3.4	24
CHILE	2.8	21
BRAZIL	2.7	660
PARAGUAY	1.9	25
ECUADOR	1.9	44
MEXICO	1.1	66
VENEZUELA	0.7	30
BOLIVIA	0	1,203
ARGENTINA	-0.5	946
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America, CEPAL		

C. THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC POLICY⁹⁸

Considering the economic data, and how Colombia avoided a debt crisis, high inflation, and the low growth of other Latin American countries, it is possible to argue that the causes of insurgency are not related to the economic performance of the country. This is why solving insurrection is not simply a matter of macroeconomic adjustments.

The Colombian crisis is basically institutional; the result of inefficient institutions unable to face social problems. When the economy of the country became bigger and complex, the intervention of the state also grew and became more complex. The state, however, did not adapt to its changing role by assuming more responsibility, and became progressively more inefficient. The state is therefore unable to perform basic services to

⁹⁸ Thoumi, Francisco E., "Políticas Económicas ante los Desafíos del Desarrollo", in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, Ed., Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogota, 1991, p. 127.

guarantee the physical security of the citizens, or the functioning of the legal system to solve conflicts and protect basic human rights.

Historically the country was controlled by an elite. The actions of these political leaders were not perceived by the great majority as measures designed to effect social welfare. The continuity in power of elites with several economic interests in common, permitted an implicit agreement about the economic system. This agreement allowed the macroeconomic policies to be stable and independent from the election results. The economic debate had been managed professionally. Politicians have been more interested in the size of their fiscal allocations than in the social impacts of monetary or fiscal policies. Each administration has had its own development plan. The differences, however, involve plans with more sectarian than ideological emphasis.

The concentration of political power is related to economic dominion. Power had been reflected in the protection of economic revenues of some groups, as it was an important obstacle to possible economic reforms.⁹⁹ Important redistributive reforms, such as agrarian reform, urban reform and tax reform had been legally approved on several occasions, but these laws had been influenced by the affected groups, avoiding radical changes. These actions diminish the capacity of the state to respond to changes in the economic environment.

The inability of the state to enforce the law is another source of economic instability. Much of the country's capital is beyond the control of the state. Even in legal

⁹⁹ Kalmonovitz, Salomon, "Los Gremios Industriales ante la Crisis" in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, Ed., Ediciones Tercer Mundo, Bogota, 1991, p. 193.

enterprises, there is a "partial legality" that enables minimization of costs. The rapid growth of the informal economy is accelerated by the narcotics boom, weakening the state and respect for legal authority. The crisis arises when the people observe the majority obtaining benefits by illegal means with low or no risk. Activities such as tax evasion, smuggling, contract violations, frauds, etc., are becoming more frequent. In this environment, the costs of establishing and operating a business are continually rising, because it is necessary to dedicate more income and resources to self protection. This situation causes economic retardation and discourages investment.

D. GUERRILLA FINANCE

In the last two decades, most people in Colombia have agreed on a need to reduce the social and political problems that create political violence. Even though some problems persist, there are clear efforts to create a better country; the new "business" orientation of guerrilla activity has made Colombians today more pessimistic about solving this problem peacefully.

1. Areas of Guerrilla Economic Influence¹⁰⁰

The following paragraphs discuss several areas in which guerrilla groups maintain an economic influence. Figure 5 shows the areas discussed.

¹⁰⁰ Based on information taken from the weekly magazine *Semana*, edition 550, November 17, 1992, pp. 32-36.

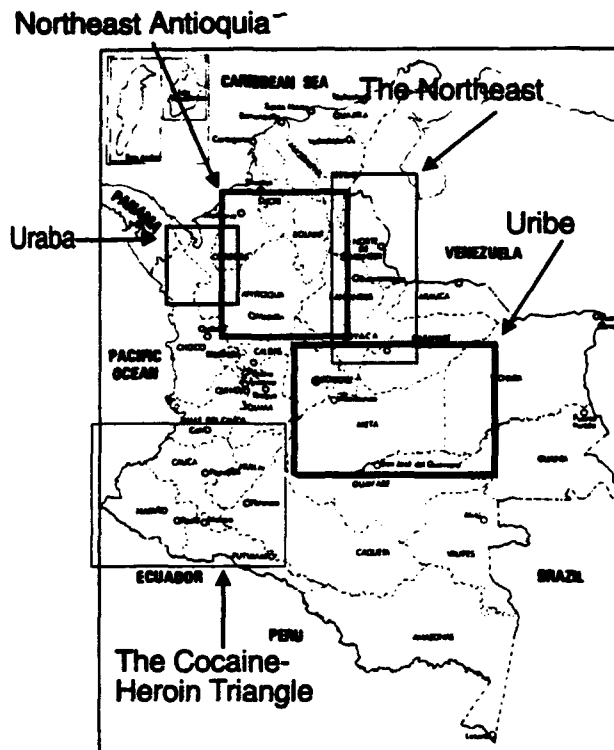


Figure 5. Areas of Guerrilla Economic Influence.

a. Urabá

Urabá is on the coast of the departments of Antioquia and Chocó. This is an area devoted mainly to agriculture, and is famous for its cattle and bananas. The area has traditionally been controlled by the EPL. Since the reintegration of the EPL into society, the FARC has tried to take control of Urabá. To achieve this objective, FARC engaged in combat against the Armed Forces in the area, infiltrated the banana unions, and extorted the cattle ranchers and land owners. But, their most notorious actions involved a

bloody battle against the former members of the EPL who maintained political control. In 1993 and 1994, the area made international news, as a result of the massacre of dozens of EPL followers.

- ♦ Members of the Astolfo Gonzalez' and Heroes of Urabá's fronts from the ELN operate in Antioquia's Urabá. The FARC has three fronts: 34th, 5th and 18th, which operate primarily in Cordoba. The number of guerrilla members in the area is close to 500.
- ♦ Urabá has so far resisted the efforts of guerrilla groups. However, the lack of DAS (Administrative Department of Security) forces in the area; the fact that there is only one jail; and constant threats against justice officials combines to put the regions future in jeopardy. The army maintains the Voltigeros and Velez battalions in the area, and in 1994 the 17th brigade was created. Of the 3,500 military personnel present in 1992, approximately 1,400 were engaged in counter-insurgency activity.

b. The Northeast

This area of the country is in the Departments of Arauca, Northern Santander, Santander and the northern part of Casanare. A large portion of the country's oil and coal production is located in this area. The region also has some development in agriculture and the cattle industry. In this area guerrilla activity is intense. The oil and coal industries generate considerable amounts of money, a part of which has, in turn, been used by the guerrillas to finance their activities. The guerrillas have an influence at every

stage of oil production: adjudication, exploration, extraction, transportation and commercialization.

It is known by the government that the guerrillas have sometimes pressured INCORA (Colombian Institute of the Agrarian Reform) officials, to give land to guerrilla collaborators in key areas near oil production facilities and pipelines. The guerrillas have also worked to infiltrate the oil company unions that are active in the area. By intimidating civilian authorities, the guerrillas have also developed levels of control over the city councils, mayors and state offices, including the placement of collaborators in key positions. Curiously, even though the area is very important to the guerrillas, incidents involving combat are infrequent, demonstrating a high degree of sophistication in controlling the area through extortion and intimidation. In Santander, the "gasoline cartel" operates by, with help from the guerrillas, stealing fuel from pipelines to be sold to the public at a lower price. Control over the coal companies in the area is also very intense. This area without any doubt is essential for the ELN.

- ♦ In the North-east operate the 10th, 45th, 12th, 20th, 23rd, and 24th fronts of the FARC. The ELN operates the Domingo Lain Front, which is their biggest and most important. There are 3,000 guerrillas in the area (FARC and ELN).
- ♦ The armed forces in the area include the 5th and 1st Brigades, and some support troops from the 6th brigade. Arauca hosts Operative Command #2, and the oil areas also have a mobile brigade. There are more than 10,500 soldiers in the area,

including more than 2,000 who are professional soldiers that are specially trained to fight guerrillas.

c. The Cocaine-Heroin Triangle

This area, a traditional location for the processing coca leaves from Peru and Bolivia, has more recently been a location of opium poppy cultivation. The area is formed by portions of the departments of Valle, Cauca, Tolima, Huila, Caqueta, Putumayo and Nariño. In this area the guerrillas watch and protect laboratories and cultivation areas used in the drug business. Besides this, they are promoting the cultivation of poppy through the distribution of seeds, training of farmers, and by being a link between producers and buyers.

- ♦ The region has five fronts of the FARC: the 29th, 8th, 13th, 21st and 6th. There is also some evidence of activities of the Manuel Vasquez Castaño front of the ELN. The region has approximately 600 guerrilla members.
- ♦ In certain areas of the triangle the state maintains a very low presence. However, the area has 7,500 members of the Armed Forces, from the 2nd, 6th and 9th brigades.

d. La Uribe

This is one of the poorest areas where the guerrilla have established operations. The guerrilla do not have an economic incentive in the area. The area has a hard geography, and its importance for the guerrilla is strategic. Indeed, this is the center of operations for the FARC. The town of La Uribe was for two decades a kind of

"Independent Republic of the Guerrilla". The "*Secretariado*" (central command), and the staff and operative commands of the FARC are all headquartered in La Uribe. On December 9, 1990, the government decided to let the armed forces take control of the area, which for political reasons had been previously left alone. The assault on "Casa Verde" -- housing the FARC's high command -- restored military control over the area.

- ♦ In La Uribe the fronts 44th, 7th and 26th of FARC operate. The number of guerrilla members number the area is around 600.
- ♦ The state introduced the Social Rehabilitation Plan in the area, and the army has a mobile brigade in constant operation.

e. Northeast Antioquia

This is a gold producing region. However, the importance of the area to the guerrillas also marks the compulsory transit of oil and coal to the coast through the region. The guerrillas tried to control traffic on the Magdalena and Cauca rivers. The guerrillas in the area also control the gold industry. The extortion and "taxes" on gold production are an important source of finance. The transportation companies that carry oil and coal are also victims of guerrilla attacks.

- ♦ In the area operate the 4th and 24th fronts of the FARC, with 200 combatants.
- ♦ The area is under the jurisdiction of the 4th and 14th brigades, along with support from the 10th brigade. The number of armed forces members is around 7,000.

2. Sources of Guerrilla Finance

a. The Communist Countries – The End of the Cold War

The communist support arrived to Colombia from Cuba after Castro seized power in 1959. Since the early 1960s, when Castro helped to establish the National Liberation Army (ELN), Cuba has supported Colombian guerrilla groups with training and, to a lesser degree, with small arms, equipment, and ammunition. In January 1966, Cuba held the Tri-Continental conference in la Havana, with the participation of the Soviet Union and China. In that conference were established the policies related with support to revolutionary efforts in Third World States¹⁰¹. The support from Cuba increased after the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in mid-1979. That support included political and military training, and logistical support especially in the form of guns and ammunition. The open support of Cuba to a failed M-19 attempt to launch rural insurgency led Colombia to break relations with that country in the early 1980s. In 1985, after the assault on the Justice Palace by the M-19, the government found that the guns used by the guerrillas on that occasion came from Nicaragua.

However, after the fall of the Soviet Union and the communism as a political option, Cuba and Nicaragua needed to take care of their own problems and practically ended direct support to the guerrillas (even though Castro and Ortega continued to support the idea of popular revolution). This is the reason why the guerrillas have

¹⁰¹ Maullin, Richard, *Soldiers, Guerrillas, and Politics in Colombia*, Rand Corporation, 1973, pp. 29-33.

changed through the 1980s. The failure of communism as a political system had left them without an ideological base with which attract people to their organization.

Analyzing events, the leaders of the FARC and the ELN, understood that it was necessary to change the incentives for people to join them. Conscious that a continuation of the activity centered in the poorest and most remote areas of the country were the most vulnerable and the least profitable, they decided to focus their actions in the richest areas¹⁰².

b. The New Strategy

Even though they were already using other economic sources to support their activities, by the 1980s the guerrilla fronts¹⁰³ increased their activities to get resources and moved from areas of cattle production, to oil, gold, coal and finally to coca (cocaine) and poppy (heroin) cultivating areas. This strategy permitted them to find sources of finance while at the same time generated an economic crisis and maintained a level of poverty, which could produce the necessary unhappiness in the people to drive them against the government.

However, the development of this strategy has different characteristics in some cases. For example, guerrilla activity in banana cultivating areas grew at the same cadence of the region. Cattle ranching areas have also their own characteristics. Even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, guerrilla groups struck out at cattle ranchers to finance their operations. After more than a decade of extortion and kidnapping , some

¹⁰² Walker, Phyllis, "National Security", in *Colombia a Country Study*, Harantty, Dennis, ed., Washington, 1988, p. 268.

¹⁰³ Structural division of the guerrilla that is based on geographical area.

cattle ranchers have abandoned their haciendas altogether, and now this activity in that areas is minimal or non-existent. Ironically, the guerrilla groups in these areas have stopped targeting ranchers in order to avoid their total extinction, and the loss of this source of funding -- the guerrilla who in the past targeted the capitalist enterprise is today leaving it alone so that it can survive.

The financial world of the guerrilla is still surrounded by mystery. However, in recent years, the government has tried to calculate earnings, and disclose them to the public. The financial data is based on intelligence information obtained through the collaboration of former guerrilla members, special agents, and documentation (including computer diskettes) captured from the guerrillas. In the last four years, through detailed analysis of the available information, the authorities have learned more about the financing methods of the FARC and the ELN than in thirty years of military counter-insurgency campaigns.¹⁰⁴ The data is summarized in Table VII.¹⁰⁵

c. FARC Diversification

The FARC has reached a high degree of sophistication in its finances. Since the mid-1980s, a constant preoccupation in the guerrilla commander's summits has been to find ways of diversify their activities and sources of finance.

The information obtained has permitted the authorities to develop a panorama of the financial activities of the FARC. Results show that today their most profitable

¹⁰⁴ Weekly magazine *Semana*, # 531 of July 7, 1992, p. 26-32.

¹⁰⁵ The financial data presented is based on the information given by the weekly magazine *Semana*, # 531, July 7, 1992. (amounts are not officially confirmed). The data was converted from Colombian pesos to US dollars, using the rate of US\$ 1,00 = \$800 pesos.

activity is a kind of tax imposed on cocaine producers. The sources for that information are former guerrilla members, and documents accounting the money sent to the "*secretariado*" (central command). Averaging \$3 million dollars per each of the eight areas of cocaine production in 1991, this totals \$24 million dollars. According to those documents captured from the FARC, the fronts or regional groups can keep 60% of the collected amounts for their own support. If that information is correct, the total income may be close to \$60 million dollars. There is not enough information about the production of heroin to make a similar calculation. However, it is clear that this business is growing very fast and, according to anti-narcotics authorities, the amount could be near one third of the total cocaine production, or \$20 million dollars. What is almost certain is that drug related business represents about 70% of FARC income, this is why, to combat this problem, the government is attacking drug production centers, that represent the heart of the group's finances.

A third source of finance is kidnapping. The authorities, based on an average of rescue payments, estimate that the average income from kidnapping is about \$50,000 dollars per person. In 1991, guerrillas kidnapped 1,580 people, and it has been confirmed that 370 of these kidnappings were made by the FARC. The total income from kidnapping that year was therefore approximately \$18.5 million dollars. Another source that today is diminishing is the extortion of cattle ranchers. Based on the available data, the authorities estimate an income of \$7.5 million dollars in 1991.

Other sources of revenue which are less known include gold mining and intermediate entrepreneurial enterprise. In 1989, the mining ministry calculated that from the \$300 million dollars worth of gold mined in the country, the guerrillas took 7%. Approximately \$21 million dollars worth of gold was taken by the guerrillas. The FARC took a third of that amount, which is \$7 million dollars. Finally, the extortion of medium-size entrepreneurs and industrialists produced approximately \$6.2 million dollars in 1991.

The total revenue for 1991 was therefore approximately \$119.2 million dollars. Based on the calculations found an intercepted document called "The Strategic Plan" of the guerrillas for 1992, the central command was expecting for 1992 an incredible increase of 20% in the income of the organization (see summary of data of FARC in Table VII).

d. ELN's Budget

The organization of the ELN is less centralized and at the same time less complicated than that of the FARC. However, because this organization is more involved with the formal and legal economy, the damage is much greater. By the mid-1980s, few, but considerably large, extortions were made to oil companies and contractors (around \$80 million dollars during the construction of the pipeline between Caño Limón and Coveñas). This was enough to resuscitate this movement, which for that time had only 400 combatants in its organization. The ELN confronts authority less, and is present in fewer departments, but without any doubt it is more efficient, because with a third of the

combatants (in 1991 - 2,000 compared with 6,000 of the FARC), they obtain more than half the resources of the FARC.

Kidnapping is the ELN's principal source of income. Their targeted groups include not only cattle ranchers, but industrialists and multinational executives. The average ransom paid to the ELN was approximately \$75,000 dollars (50% more than the average paid to the FARC). The authorities confirmed that this organization made more than 240 kidnappings in 1991, meaning approximately \$18 million dollars in ransom. However, on a diskette containing financial information that was intercepted in Bucaramanga, in some important kidnappings, the rate of profit is higher, such as the case of the daughter of Senator Forero Fetecua, when the ELN were paid \$3 million dollars.

Regarding the theft of gold, the calculations of the mining ministry consider that the ELN could make about \$14 million dollars, because they are twice as active in gold producing regions as the FARC. Paralleling the kidnappings in the petroleum areas of Arauca, the ELN had perfected the mechanisms to extort contractors of public works projects in that department. Because they have permanent access to information regarding the government's budget, they know the availability of resources to the contractors. Almost none of the contractors can escape the actions of the ELN, and each pays an average of 15% of their contract's value to avoid being targeted for sabotage. Government contracts totaled US\$56 million in 1991, so it can be deduced that they received approximately US\$8.5 million.

Other forms of extortion add another US\$2 million. Colombian government information also reveals that some mayors and government officials, pressured by the ELN, paid the group approximately US\$8 million of government funds. Extortion of coal producers results in an estimated US\$10 million more. Intelligence reports also maintain that the ELN is managing some transportation enterprises (land and rivers) which could produce around US\$3 million. All of the mentioned amounts yield a grand total of US\$63.5 million (see summarized data of the ELN in Table VII).

TABLE VII. SUMMARIZED DATA OF GUERRILLA INCOME¹⁰⁶

FARC INCOME		ELN INCOME	
	US\$ millions		US\$ millions
Kidnappings	18.5	Kidnappings	18
Extortion to cattlers	7.5	Gold production	14
Gold Production	7	Extortion contractors	8.5
Cocaine	60	Extortion others	2
Heroin	20	government resources	8
others	6.2	coal	10
		transportation enterprises	3
TOTAL	119.2	TOTAL	63.5

Another important fact that these amounts disclose is that the revenues of the FARC and ELN, combine to locate the guerrilla groups among the 15 biggest enterprises in the country. Individually, the FARC could be number 23 and the ELN number 45. The amounts are larger still if one takes into account that the expenses of the guerrillas are much less than those of legal companies. For example, the estimated cost per combatant of the FARC is approximately US\$900 a year, including health-care, food, clothing, and ammunition plus bonuses for especial occasions. Multiplying this amount

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

to reflect a membership of 6,000, yields only US\$5.4 million. ELN guerrillas live a little better. Each member costs the organization US\$1,250 annually, yielding a total expense of US\$2.5 million.

The balance funds is a huge amount (US\$ 113.8 million for the FARC and US\$61 million for the ELN). The government maintains that the guerrillas invest no more than US\$6.5 millions a year in weapons, meaning that the remainder is used for two purposes: growth and investment. The government suspects that the groups are already investing that money in foreign countries.

E. THE COST OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

1. General Costs

The guerrilla actions are very expensive to the country -- in both human and economic terms. During 1991, more than 3,300 people died as a consequence of political violence (see Table VIII). Since 1967, the conflict has taken 25,000 lives, and in the period 1980-1990, the guerrillas made 2,137 kidnappings that were known to the authorities.¹⁰⁷

The economic costs are also enormous. The attacks against pipelines, increased military expenses (the so called economy of war because of the tax increases to companies affected by the guerrilla), kidnapping ransoms, attacks against the electric utility infrastructure, extortion, etc., were estimated to be US\$331.2 million in 1991

¹⁰⁷ Data taken from a study of the Colombian Institute of Political Sciences, presented in an article by Rodrigo Losada in *El Tiempo*, November 8, 1992, p. 3B.

(around 1% of the GNP -- see Table IX). This amount is lower than the reality, because it doesn't take into account other losses, such as those affecting industrial and agricultural production, attacks on towns, ecological damage, etc...(see Table X). Even though this economic loss is extremely high, it has not been enough to create instability in the economy, but of course things could be better without this burden.

TABLE VIII'. DEATHS RELATED WITH THE GUERRILLA CONFLICT

Year	Members of the Armed Forces	Civilians	Guerrilla	Politic killings	total
1967-1971	180	538	*	**	718
1972-1976	129	219	*	**	348
1977-1981	202	428	*	**	630
1982-1986	832	2,411	2,151	**	5,394
1987-1991	1,901	2,315	3,113	10,136	17,465
Total					24,555

* This amount is believed to be included in civilians

** Not available data

¹ Source : Institute of Politic Sciences, Colombia.

TABLE IX'. ECONOMIC COSTS CAUSED BY POLITICAL VIOLENCE
(Approximated Data)

	US\$ Millions
Attacks to pipelines	114
Military Operations	103
Attacks to the electric system	11.5
Kidnappings, extortion *	102.7
Total	331.2
Costs for public sector	237
Cost for public sector	94.2

* Costs included in Table VII except drug related revenues

¹ Source : Institute of Politic Sciences, Colombia.

TABLE X'. ECONOMIC COSTS NOT INCLUDED

Diminishing of agricultural production
Diminishing of industrial production
Rescues for kidnappings not reported to authorities
Destroyed commercial and public vehicles
Destroyed bridges and roads
Material losses for attacks to towns
Damage to the environment for oil spills
Destroyed industrial and commercial installations
Foreign and national investment not made

Source : Institute of Politic Sciences, Colombia

In 1993, the studies included new data relating to the cost of the confrontation. The Health Ministry estimated the violent deaths for 1992 at 27,500¹⁰⁸ -- the data included killings resulting from everything from family abuse to drug related deaths. The average age of the victim was 23 years. If we consider that each of those persons could work 40 years more, producing at least US\$56,000 -- based on the average income of the Colombian population -- it is evident that the country is loosing in deaths what it is gaining in development. The destruction of human capital in 1992 amounted to 3.7% of the GNP (see Table 2.1). At least 10% of these deaths are believed to have been caused by the guerrilla confrontation -- human capital destroyed by the guerrillas is worth, in economic terms, US\$154 million in 1992 alone. But the expenses caused by the violence do not end there. The state spends an annual US\$84 million on health care related to

¹⁰⁸ Data of the Colombian Ministry of Health, presented in *Semana* #596, October 5, 1993, p. 58-62.

violence.¹⁰⁹ Assuming again that 10% is caused by guerrilla activity, the cost is US\$8.4 millions.

In general, the guerrilla has affected, either directly or indirectly, most of the components of the nation economy. It is almost impossible to determine the real cost of this phenomenon, however, because it has been influencing the economy directly for more than a decade and there is not enough data. What is certain is that without this violence, the country could invest that money in the social reforms and other forms of progress that the guerrillas claim are necessary.

2. Foreign Investment

Foreign investment in the country for 1988 is presented in Table XI¹¹⁰.

TABLE XI. FOREIGN INVESTMENT

AMOUNT OF INVESTMENT (1988)		ORIGIN OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT (1988)	
	US\$ Millions		% Distribution
Petroleum	274	United States	35.2
Manufacturing	111.7	Japan	2.8
Mining (other than petroleum)	17.4	Great Britain	16.8
Agriculture and fishing	5.9	West Germany	14.5
Wholesale & retail trade	4.6	Holland	3
Other sectors	50.4	Panama	2.6
Total	464	Spain	5
		Others	20.1
		Total	100

¹⁰⁹ Data of the Colombian Ministry of Health, presented in the *El Tiempo*, October 10, 1993, p. 2A.

¹¹⁰ National Department of Planning (DNP), published by the Colombian Information Service, Colombian Embassy, Washington, 1992.

The effects of the guerrillas on the foreign investment are varied.¹¹¹ For example, some companies are reluctant to send advanced equipment into a risky environment, causing costs due to disadvantaged locations and inefficient production. In addition, the adverse effects of that violence generate an economic crisis in the country by reducing the profitability of business.

Despite the difficult conditions under which some of those investments operate, there is little inclination on the part of the business to pull out their investments as a result of the terrorist threats and attacks. According to the Rand Corporation, foreign businessmen approach the problem somewhat philosophically, pointing out that businesses cope with terrorism just as they survive war and other types of violence. Moreover, businessmen are optimistic about the outcome of the activity in Colombia. Although terrorists may harass and attack business, only rarely do they try to damage the operation itself, in part because they don't want to alienate local labor, or lose a source of income.

The guerrillas attack foreign businesses for a number of reasons. First, because they want to promote an ideology that blames capitalism and foreign investment, and accuses foreigners of stealing national resources. Secondly, they wish to obtain international publicity that could embarrass the incumbent government. But what investors consider more important is the desire of the guerrilla to obtain financial resources through extortion and kidnapping.

¹¹¹ RAND Corporation, Study R-2842-DOC -- "Problems of US Business Operating Abroad in Terrorist Environments", pp. 1-29.

To cope with the specific threats, many large firms have developed corporation-wide security programs that include provisions for executive protection, security of employees and facilities, intelligence gathering and analysis, and crisis management. The business that are presently operating in Colombia have been successful in letting the guerrillas know that they have a firm position and won't pay extortion.¹¹² This is in part because they know that once they pay a demand, the guerrilla won't stop asking for money. The situation is different with foreign companies on temporary contracts. It is known that the "Mannesman" was paying high amounts of money to the guerrillas while they were working in the country, but still this is a rare situation.

For the foreign companies Colombia is a new market. It is true that the overall costs of guerrilla terrorism increase expenses of the companies. This is why the level of foreign investment is low in Colombia. With a safer environment, and taking into account the economic stability of the country, the foreign investment could be bigger, and economic growth could be much higher.

¹¹² Interview of the Commanding General of the Military Forces, General Ramón Emilio Gil, in *El Tiempo*, September 19, 1993, p. 20A.

V. TOWARD ENDING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

A. FIRST RECOMPOSITION STRATEGIES

On February 27, 1980, the guerrilla movement M-19 assaulted the embassy of the Dominican Republic in Bogota. The negotiations to end the guerrilla occupation of the embassy, were the prelude to a decade of peace talks between the government and the armed movements. In 1982, with the arrival of President Belisario Betancourt, the country observed a drastic change in the traditional treatment of the guerrilla problem. Positive signs in the beginning of this administration were: the official recognition of the "objective and subjective" internal causes of the violence, negotiations, agreements with the guerrilla groups, the political opening of the regime, and the National Rehabilitation Plan (PNR) for areas affected by violence.

The dynamic of this process allowed in 1984 the signing of cease-fire agreements with three of the biggest guerrilla groups: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the 19 of April Movement (M-19), and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL). However, non-compliance with agreements on the part of both parties, successive ruptures of the cease-fire, lack of social and economic reforms, parliamentary blocking, military opposition against perceived excessive permissivity, and economic crisis were the obstacles that very soon created a deep sense of frustration. The President did not find adequate support for his project, and at the end of the period there was a poor

balance in terms of peace. The ELN, which had never participated in the peace process, was again joined by the rest of the guerrilla groups; the cease-fire was declared broken, and the groups supported an initiative of guerrilla union called the National Guerrilla Coordinator (CNG). This process helped to militarily strengthen the groups, and even generate new movements, such as the Indians' Quintin Lame, Free Homeland (Patria Libre), and the Revolutionary Party of the Workers.

The internal conflict was again present, though more pervasive than before, but the phenomenon was perceived differently by the public than in the past. In 1985, the bloody assault on the Palace of Justice (the location of the Colombian Supreme Court), and a widespread massacres made by the front "Ricardo Franco" (dissidents in the FARC), clearly decreased the legitimacy of the guerrilla movements as a political alternative. However, there was a lesson learned: a negotiated solution to the conflict was possible, but would require a parallel transformation of the country's institutions.

This was a lesson that the next administration (1986-1990) recognized too late.¹¹³ In an effort to differentiate itself from the last government, the administration of President Virgilio Barco designed a new strategy for peace. His government tried to make reform alone the effort for recovering legitimacy and reducing the influence of the guerrilla. The National Rehabilitation Plan (PNR) was a key part of the new peace strategy. The plan conceived the relocation of public expenditures not only to the areas affected by violence, but also in areas that were economically marginal. The coverage of the program grew

¹¹³ Bejarano, Ana Maria, "Estrategias de Paz y Apertura Democrática" in *Al Filo del Caos*, Buitrago, Francisco, ed., Bogota, 1991, p. 59.

from 177 towns in 1986 to 297 towns and 5 million people in 1988.¹¹⁴ The resources targeted for this plan were doubled, and the people in affected areas were involved in the decision making processes.

In 1988, guerrilla violence was still a national phenomenon, somewhat accelerated by the activities of extreme right-wing groups supported by narcotics-traffickers. The president recognized the necessity of constitutional reform, but he was limited by the opposition of the traditional parties and the State Council. After two years the peace plan was very close to failure. In May 1988 the kidnapping of the political leader Alvaro Gomez by the M-19, was an attempt to force a national dialogue. This time the group used a different attitude, and offered unilateral cease-fire. It is true that the group was militarily weak, but they were capable of terrorist action. In spite of this, they choose the political solution. The government then recognized the necessity of a change in strategy, and began a dialogue with the group. That is how conversations turned to peace. In the beginning of the 1990s, facing the possibility of a profound change through constitutional reform, the M-19, the EPL, and other newly formed guerrilla groups decided to definitively reincorporate in legal political life. Only the FARC and the ELN decided to remain outside this process.

B. CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

A great majority of Colombians felt that reforming the Constitution of 1886 was necessary to profoundly transform institutions. On several occasions, the old political

¹¹⁴ *Informe Financiero Contraloria General de la República*, June, 1988.

country or Judicial instances, denied the possibility of a plebiscite to ask the Colombians about the subject. Finally, on May 27, 1990, and, in spite of the fact that the Supreme Court had held that there was no provision in the constitution for a referendum, the Colombian people expressed their choice in the presidential elections, voting by a great majority to modify the constitution. There was nothing to be done; this was the will of the people, and the enemies of change finally had to accept it. The Supreme Court declared Decree 1926 of 1990 constitutional. This act formalized the legal aspects to the new constitution, and did not restrict the ability of the National Constitutional Assembly to deal with relevant issues. In the elections of December 9, 1990, the people elected a highly representative Constitutional Assembly, with members of all parties, including Indians and former guerrilla members.

The basic reforms in the new constitution were oriented toward the following subjects:¹¹⁵

1. Legitimacy of the State

The principal idea was to strengthen the legitimacy of the State as a participative democracy. Some of the reasons that made this reform necessary were: the political marginality of large groups of the population, the feeling that there was a lack of social and political representation, and the loss of trust in the basic institutions of the state. This lack of legitimacy also affected the political parties, and to some degree the groups representing private interests.

¹¹⁵ *Reflections on a New Constitution*, document prepared by the Government of Cesar Gaviria Trujillo, November 1990, pp. 3-28.

To strengthen legitimacy, it was necessary to change from a representative democracy to a participative democracy. This aspect included more than the creation of mechanisms of direct democracy such as the plebiscite, the popular initiative, and the revocation of the presidential mandate. Reform also included citizen participation in non-electoral scenarios. For example, the people now had more opportunity to create and participate in political parties, industrial groups, Unions, their community, and public administration.

2. The Bill of Rights

The constitution of 1886 was timid in defining civil and political rights and the mechanisms to support individual and collective rights. The new constitution increased the power in deciding issues that may affect them, and recognized new rights and effective mechanisms to protect them. Because the insurgency groups were allowed to participate in the reform process, they included in the constitution some of the reforms they believed necessary to increase social justice. To develop clear limits to official authority, new jurisdictional resources were created, including a Constitutional Court, a group that is independent from the Supreme Court, and designed to be more flexible and adaptable to changes over time.

Another purpose was to protect individuals from the excesses of authority, and to guarantee the rights of minorities. It placed great importance on freedom of religion and related education, labor rights, economic security and independence issues, and cultural and social rights; all of them necessary for social justice. It treats health and

education as a right and not a privilege, that must be defended by the state and respect by the people. The children get their own rights mentioned and protected above all. The environmental protection is treated as a right of the community. Mechanism to guarantee the comply of this rights and all the rights are giving to the state, to avoid that good intentions only finish in the paper of the constitution.

3. Strong Institutions

It is important to give the state the power to face the challenges of the present, not only in the fighting against unstabilizing factors, but in relation with economic and social development, the modernization of the country, and the progress in general. This doesn't mean to concentrate power in the executive branch, this mean a pluralist conception where all Colombians can participate. Some of the concrete mechanisms to this achieve this are oriented as follows:

a. Authentic Representation

To avoid the separation between the institutions and the citizens the following measures were taken:

- ♦ Widening of the electoral system not only to majors but to governors and community groups as well.
- ♦ To increase participation of minorities in the congress, as Indians or blacks, some of their representatives will have different treatment to allow them to be in the congress.

- ♦ More mechanisms of control to supervise the organization of elections are included, to guarantee equality.
- ♦ Institutionalization of political parties to guarantee their independence and also their finance. Control of the political campaigns to guarantee the transparency of their funding.
- ♦ Guarantee of opposition to those movements not in the government, with access to information and communication means of the state.
- ♦ Creation of referendum and popular initiative to propose new laws or reforms to the constitution. In the past the congress was the only mechanism to obtain law changes.

b. An Efficient Congress

Toward the moralization of the legislative function. To strength the congress not only its composition and integration were modified, the following changes were also made:

- ♦ improve its efficiency in the legislative task, rationalizing the discussion of initiatives, and creating clear responsibilities and duties to its members.
- ♦ Moralization, through the creation of an statute of the congressmen, able to give more transparency to their actions.
- ♦ Give more authority to the congress to formulate economic and social policies, public order maintenance policies , planning and budgeting.

c. Strengthening the Justice System

The idea is to have more means to stop the culture of violence, and avoid that justice to be behind reality. The changes included:

- ♦ Autonomy of administration and budgeting for justice organizations.
- ♦ decentralization of justice, and a closer relation with the community. The creation of "judges of peace" and "Indian judges" for their communities, allow small conflicts to be solved faster without waiting for available time of regular judges, or even finishing without solution.
- ♦ Give more instruments to the government to fight against terrorism and political violence through the legalization of rewards, punishment negotiation, creation of special judges with protected identity, , etc..
- ♦ Give more participation in justice to the executive branch through the creation of the Office of the Attorney General.

d. The State of Siege

This instrument used in the past to allow the executive branch to promulgate special laws, became permanent under the last constitution. Now is divided in Interior Commotion or State of Emergency. Both are more gradual, and can be used only for a limited amount of time, and under the control of the Constitutional Court. However, it still permit the President to emit special laws to protect the state.

e. Public Administration

The modification was necessary to give the Colombians a more stable and efficient public administration, with more degree of flexibility and transparency.

C. ECONOMIC REFORMS

In 1990, the President Cesar Gaviria convinced the Colombians that it was necessary to finish with the oligopolies protected against the external competition. Since that time the government has embarked on a rapid program of economic liberalization with the goal of internationalizing Colombia's economy¹¹⁶. The program called the "Apertura" (opening), is in the present a comprehensive five-year plan of economic and trade reforms designed to remove legal restrictions impeding foreign investment and private enterprise, and to spur economic development and higher growth. Foreign investment regulations and exchange controls have been relaxed. Major areas of the economy -- including banks, telecommunications, public utilities, ports, and transportation -- are being privatized to reduce the role of government and strengthen Colombian private sector.

The administration strongly promote export development as the key of long-term sustained growth. Colombia will benefit from increased oil revenues, due to the recent Cusiana field discovery (the largest in the western Hemisphere since Prudhoe Bay was discovered in Alaska). Oil exports, in 1991 were 200,000 bpd, and are expected to increase to 500,000 bpd by 1995, with the new discoveries still not in full capacity. In

¹¹⁶ *Colombian Economic Facts*, Colombian Embassy, Washington DC, 1992.

addition coffee exports will remain strong due to the new policies of the Coffee Growers Federation, that decided to sell at a price higher than the world price to compensate for the highest quality of the Colombian coffee. After several years without agreement in world prices and quotas, the price of coffee dropped to one of the lowest levels in history. However, the new strategy of the Colombian Coffee Federation is giving excellent results, and the price in the present is increasing.

Coal production is also expected to increase substantially. Exports in non-traditional industries -- cut flowers, textiles, apparel and leather goods, chemicals and food / beverage products -- are becoming increasingly important components of Colombia's economy. As part of the government commitment to free trade, import tariffs for all raw materials and intermediate goods have been eliminated. The Gaviria administration has also initiated a micro-enterprise development program, designed to provide training, financial assistance and export development support for 1.2 million micro-enterprises (private companies with less than ten employees).

Foreign investment is also growing.¹¹⁷ Coal is attracting new investors and besides the Exxon and other American companies, enterprises as Drummon Ltd, an Alabama oil company plan to invest US \$50 million to built a private port in the Caribbean coast. From 1990 through last year, investment in coal projects more than doubled to US\$ 475 million; this year, foreign investment in that sector is expected to double to US\$ 1 billion. In the oil sector, foreign companies plan to also double investment rates, spending US\$

¹¹⁷ Brooke, James, "Colombia Booms Despite its Violence," *New York Times*, February 10, 1994.

5.5 billion through the end of the decade to develop Cusiana. Even though the foreign investment growth is very high compared with the data of 1988 (see chapter 4 - Foreign investment), the political violence is still costing several growth points. According with Colombia's Finance Minister Rudolf Homes, he estimate that without the killings and kidnappings by guerrillas, foreign investment in Colombia could be 25% higher.

Last year, the country recorded 5% growth, slightly above a 20 year average of 4.4%. Inflation maintained a four-year decline, hitting 23%, half the level of neighboring Venezuela. Flush with US\$ 8 billion in reserves, Colombia is trimming its foreign debt. Last year Colombia prepaid US\$ 450 million in public sector foreign debt, reducing the debt to its current level of US\$ 13.8 billion (one of the lowest in Latin America). After signing free trade pacts with virtually all the Andean nations, Colombia now plans to sign pacts this year with the common markets of Central America and the Caribbean, and formalize its pact with Mexico and Venezuela.

Although Colombia's macroeconomic indicators look good, not all boats are rising. In the last months, the government has recognized some problems in the process and had made some adjustments; for example imports of textiles and chicken had been restricted to protect national producers from dumping. The revaluation of the peso has been another problem, and is taking out dynamism to the export sector and increasing the imports, creating the possibility of negative balances. This is due to the high amount of capital that had enter in the country since 1990. However, these problems were expected,

based on similar experiences of countries like Chile which initiated this process before than Colombia, and today has its economy stable and growing.

A problem that is still present is the number of people living below the poverty line. This amount has increased by about one million since 1990, to include about half the population of 33 million people. In 15 years, the gap between average rural and urban incomes doubled. The distance between rich and poor is also increasing. However, the present policies don't justify the violence of the guerrillas, because an stable and strong economy increase the possibilities of social solutions. The government is aware of problems and is acting to close the present gaps. The violence instead of helping, delay the process.

D. SOCIAL INVESTMENT

The new constitution guarantee the distribution of wealth. However, this is a slow process. Some of the concrete actions that the government is planning to take, include a Plan of Social Investment with a budget of US\$ 6 billion¹¹⁸ that will be used in the following areas:

- ♦ Reducing the number of persons living in conditions of poverty. Increase support will be given to primary and secondary education, health services in rural areas, improve drinking water and sewer system capabilities, and construction of 600,000 new homes.

¹¹⁸

Colombian Political Facts, Colombian Embassy, Washington DC, 1991.

- ♦ Constructing physical infrastructure, including new roads and highways, restoring a national rail system and modernizing Colombian ports.
- ♦ Increase investment in science and technology and environmental protection.
- ♦ During the Gaviria government the National Rehabilitation Plan (PNR) increased coverage to 450 towns which equal 25% of the population.¹¹⁹
- ♦ For 1994 were assigned US\$ 38 millions for social security, and the law regulating this sector was modified.

E. NATIONAL SECURITY MEASURES

According with the government, from the 340 towns with the highest rates of homicide, in 187 are guerrilla groups, in 7 operate extreme right groups, and in 45 both kind of groups are simultaneously. This is the reason why the guerrilla issue was included in a plan called "Security for the People" developed by the government in November 1993.¹²⁰ The plan is directed toward all the forms of violence and actions against the law. The measures related with the guerrilla are the following.

1. Administrative Measures¹²¹

To avoid that the guerrilla in areas as Arauca continue using money that belong to the state, and using the agrarian reform to their own benefit, the government established some control measures. All money allocations to that areas will be closely controlled by the Finance Ministry, the planning Department, and the Military Forces.

¹¹⁹ Article in *Semana*, # 604, Bogota, November 1993.

¹²⁰ *National Strategy Against the Violence*, Presidency of Colombia, November 1993.

¹²¹ *Semana*. Edition # 550, Bogota, November 17, 1992, pp. 32-36.

The management of Incora (Colombian Institute for the Agrarian Reform) was also centralized for that area, to control the land assignment in areas of guerrilla influence. This decision was designed to avoid that the regional agencies of the Incora continue assigning lands near the pipelines and oil wells, to guerrilla collaborators. The measures goes against the decentralization policies, but due to the special characteristic of the problem, they are necessary to cut this finance mean of the guerrilla.

2. Judicial Measures

In coordination with the office of the Attorney General, functions of judicial police were assigned to the armed forces in some areas of the country. The level of the war make necessary that the evidences collected by the authorities, the analysis, death removals, etc.. have judicial validity. Other measure is the new anti-kidnapping law, which increase punishment for kidnapping until 60 years, and condemn the payment of rescues in money, or intervention in the negotiations with kidnappers.

3. Other measures against Guerrilla Finance

This measures are pointed toward the organization that take care of the finances of the guerrilla. The office of the Attorney General will have power to intervene bank accounts or organizations where the government determine that the money of the guerrilla is present.

4. Military Measures

The government and the public opinion are very pessimistic to finish this conflict in a pacific way. The guerrilla attitude is against the will of the majority of

Colombians. The fact of not being part of the transformation of the country, convinced the people that this is no longer an organization with political intentions, but a crime enterprise. Then, to strength the military Forces and be successful in the fight against these groups, the government developed the following investment plans.

- ♦ The Police Force will be increased in 25 thousand, to consolidate a force of 114 thousand members in 1997. Special emphasis will be given to the rural police, which will be increased in 8,500 members.
- ♦ For the Military Forces, the government will increase the number of professional soldiers. These are soldiers chosen from the best regular soldiers, that after finishing their compulsory period voluntarily decide to continue in the force. Their salary are much better and their food and supplies are covered by the Military Forces. The goal for 1995 is to increase this soldiers by 10,000 (additional to the 23,000 joined in 1993), to make new Mobil brigades. For the year 2000, the 30% of the Colombian Army is expected to be professional soldiers, able to keep peace and defend the sovereignty and public order, because they are more prepared and are in the military forces by their own will.
- ♦ The system of Mobil Brigades created in 1989 will continue to be increasing. The advantage of this Brigades is that in persecution of guerrillas, they can operate in different areas without asking permission to the military authorities of that area. Another advantage is the possibility of accumulate experience and knowledge

persecuting the same group by several months. The plan is to create one Mobil Brigade for each of the five big areas in which the country is militarily divided.

- ♦ There will be more investment in the mobilization capacity. Particularly in the area of helicopters, and patrols in maritime and river areas. The money to acquire new elements will be given, but also the maintenance resources for these equipment will be increased. The communication and electronic systems will be modernized.
- ♦ The government will continue its policy to improve salary and welfare of the militaries. When the process is finished, the increment is expected to be a real 40% compared with the income in 1991. In 1992 the government assigned US\$ 25 millions for this program, and in four years is expected to cost approximately US\$ 381 millions.
- ♦ The Intelligence organizations will be strengthen. One priority will be the increase of their budget to get better information, and increase the coordination between the different organizations with that mission within the Armed Forces and the government. The Superior Council for Defense and National Security, will create mechanisms of analysis of intelligence information, to facilitate decision making for the government.
- ♦ The deserter program is other measure. In areas of combat, the commands are able to pay until \$500 thousand pesos to deserters which resign to the guerrilla and give information. If the guerrilla give his or her gun, will receive extra \$100 thousand pesos. If the information is useful to capture the leader of the front, the reward

increase to \$1 million pesos. More than 600 deserters have used this program, and several front leaders are now in jail.

- ♦ The allocation of money for the Military Forces is now faster. The government is convinced that delays in money for fuel or intelligence purpose, can cause great damage in operations that need continuity as a base for success. The expenditures for the public force will be increased from 2.8% of the GNP in 1993, to 4% in the next 10 years. Part of this belong to salary increases.
- ♦ The possibilities of negotiations remain open if the guerrilla organization prove its will of peace. In April 1994, a new movement of 500 guerrillas join legal political life. This is the group of the Socialist Renovation Current (a dissident of the ELN).

What seems to be clear for the government of the president Gaviria, is that the investment in Defense for the internal problem is necessary. With a strong military forces, able to hardly hit the guerrilla, is possible to convince their members that the negotiation is more guarantee to their future than the continuation of their business. Is necessary to keep the public opinion in our side. The success in operations is clearly supported, but the opinion is very easy to change as was proved whit the terrorist attacks of the Medellin cartel, which found echo of negotiation and dialogue. The public weaken when they feel that the war will touch them hard. In recent opinion polls¹²², the Colombian had expressed the following:

¹²² Yankelovich Colombia: Research and Consulting, (Margin error 3.5%) reported in *Semana*, #540, Bogota, June 2 1992.

- ♦ 60.8% of the Colombians think that military forces must take the initiative and use all their methods to combat the guerrilla. 7.3% disagree and 31.9% don't know.
- ♦ 60.2% of the Colombian think that the guerrilla is the biggest enemy of the country. 25.8% Narcotics-trafficking, 6.6% none, 7.4% don't know.
- ♦ Other opinion poll¹²³ shows that 64% of the population support the measures against the guerrilla taken by the government. 23% are against and 13% don't know.

It is desirable for the near end of this war that this policy continue in the future, parallel with the social and political reforms. The results already support this hypothesis because the military actions are beginning to give results. In December 1993 the President presented the following results for that year:¹²⁴

- ♦ 3,115 guerrillas were captured , 30 of them were leaders.
- ♦ The kidnappings has decreased 40% compared with 1992 (this is also due to the law reforms).
- ♦ The assaults to pipelines also is lower than in 1992.

¹²³ Invamer Gallup, reported in *Semana*, #550, Bogota, November 1992, p. 36.

¹²⁴ *Discurso del Presidente Gaviria en Ceremonia Ascenso Generales, El Tiempo*, December 10, 1993, Judicial Section.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Manual Marulanda Velez is still in the mountains. He is now 66 years old, and he has been an active guerrilla for half a century. It is clear that he will never see his revolutionary vision of Colombia fulfilled. There is a distinct possibility that he may have admitted this to himself; his survival as a guerrilla indicates a necessary level of intelligence. Whether his continued belief in violent revolution is criminal or not is for the judiciary to determine, but continued violent action is clearly illegal, and the majority of Colombia's institutional and societal stakeholders have expressed a willingness to end it.

A. CONCLUSIONS

This, then, may be the most simple and direct conclusion to be offered: **Colombia as a nation is prepared to end political violence.** Beyond the willingness to end political violence, however, is agreement on the means through which this is to be accomplished. The constitutional reform and national dialog approach that has emerged in the early 1990s is expected to maintain wide-spread support for the foreseeable future. Inherent to this approach, however, is the willingness to maintain the increased cost and decreased benefit to those who would participate in political violence.

La Violencia marked the passionate nature of Colombian political life at its violent extreme. Approximately 200,000 lives were lost, as well as a substantial percentage of the nation's infrastructure, and migration to the cities made lasting changes in the distribution of the population. The emotive bonds to Colombia's Liberal and Conservative Parties were traditional to the point where they often flowed through bloodlines, and for several years these bonds drew supporters beyond the polls and into violent conflict with adherents of the opposition.

This war was more a fight for power than a struggle to find a better way of life for Colombians, and by the time it was finally brought under control, things had not changed very much. Despite the fact that the traditional parties had reached an agreement, motivations powerful enough to drive violence in pursuit of political objectives were still present. National institutions continued to be weak, creating an obstacle that impeded access to political rights and the development of social justice. This was not Gaitán's vision of the modern Colombia, and the "Revolution on the March" did not deliver the social reforms that it promised. Once again, people took up arms, formed guerrilla groups, and vowed to seek a political change through violent means. More recently, the rise of right-wing groups illustrated a perceived need to resort to violence, which is paradoxical in a country that weathered the consequences of the world economy crisis with better performance than many others in Latin America.

This work has sought to answer the question, "What are the causes and consequences of guerrilla violence in Colombia?"

1. Causes

While the research allows causes of guerrilla violence to be discussed, it by no means generates a comprehensive list of specific causes. What can be said, however, is that the root causes of guerrilla violence in Colombia lie in three principal categories: social, political, and economic. Further, problems in each of these categories seem to center on the social, political, and economic *institutions* involved.

The social dimension is characterized by the weakness of the state institutions, and the absence of true reform over the years. As the nation modernizes, these institutions, which normally function to ease societal conflict as it arises, have failed to maintain an arena for effectively resolving issues. This has frequently caused the political regime to lose its legitimacy.

The political contribution to guerrilla violence is significant throughout the nation's history. It is particularly acute, however, when considering the period of the National Front, which according to some analysts represented a reconfirmation of political power in the traditional elites, limiting the democratic participation of other forces, practically prohibiting legal opposition, and institutionalizing the clientelism.

There are, however, several facts which lead away from accepting political reasons as *the* cause of continuing guerrilla violence:

- Political participation was not *completely* restricted, as evidenced by the existence of organizations such as ANAPO and the MRL.

- ♦ If duopoly contributed to clientelism, it also prevented one party from maintaining a monopoly.

To understand the economic roots of guerrilla violence, a distinction must be made between the country's economic performance and the economic incentives of violence.

The macroeconomic performance and the unequal distribution of income in Colombia is as good as or better than those of many other countries in Latin America, with lower levels of violence and even without guerrilla. The development of the economy may have retarded by internal conflicts, but the economy has nonetheless developed, and done so independent of election results. Very early in our history, the dominant classes maintained economic power, and the common interests of the traditional parties, including coffee growers and industry, permitted a healthy development of the macroeconomic policies. Today this continues to be true, and the economic groups maintain direct access to the formulation of policies, that benefit their capitalist interests, sometimes to the detriment of the lower income group.

It is therefore possible to argue that, economically speaking, incentives play the main role in this war. The desire of individuals to maximize their gain is the driving force that makes them join the guerrillas. Some people find in violence a good method of expressing their desire for resources, and the initial possibility of achieving equality and a better distribution of wealth was a good incentive for joining the revolution. In the case of the FARC and the ELN, it is clear that violent insurrection has become big business.

As noted in Chapter VI, the earnings of the guerrilla groups place them among the most profitable economic enterprises in the country, with an annual estimated profit of US\$175 million.

2. Consequences

The consequences of guerrilla violence in Colombia may likewise be categorized as social, political, and economic, and should also be viewed as being difficult to definitively and comprehensively identify. In addition to the obvious but no less significant cost in human lives, however, there are several impacts of the violence which should be enumerated.

In Chapter VII, economic losses for the country were estimated in US\$331.2 million for 1991, but this amount does not include other costs that are very hard to quantify. For example, the costs of lost human lives, the extra costs in health-care, the investments that are withheld from the country despite good macroeconomic conditions, and the future costs that will arise from not being able to spend more money on social development. However, it is also important to notice that, despite this dark panorama, the country has learned to grow and progress in even this environment.

Another consequence is the multiplier effect of guerrilla violence. Because the guerrilla groups targeted violence to achieve control over resources and territories rather than to advance political ideology, the violence becomes cyclical; guerrilla groups use violence to acquire resources from the land owners or entrepreneurs, and some of these victims respond violently to protect their interests, because the state's institutions are not

considered strong enough, or because of the feeling that the problem cannot be solved in a pacific way under any circumstances. The problem is that these groups tend to value property rights over human life. In some rural areas, people are eliminated just for being suspected of belonging to a leftist organization. Union leaders, politicians, and members of the media, to name a few, become targets of these groups. The reverse is also true; the guerrillas eliminate people whom they think are helping the government.

3. Prospects for the Future

In spite of the history of guerrilla violence in Colombia, the 1990s are promising to be a decade of long awaited success for the country's institutions. The isolation of the various stakeholders in society is coming to an end, and each is entering into a more comprehensive dialog with the others. Several key developments are worthy of mention in support of such optimism:

- ♦ There has been a societal recognition of dialog and participatory government as the means through which to achieve, at last, true progress towards social justice.
- ♦ There has been a rejection of violence as a means of obtaining political objectives, and an increase in the use and membership of non-violent institutions and movements.
- ♦ Some guerrilla groups are demilitarizing and developing legitimate channels through which to advance their agenda.

It appears that the traditional motivations of those who pursue the life of a guerrilla are being directly addressed by these changes, a hypothesis that is supported by several observances:

- ♦ Support for guerrilla groups is decreasing in key rural areas, which have traditionally been pillars of guerrilla support. It appears as though the national dialog and reconciliation is producing results in winning the participation of rural communities.
- ♦ There is a widespread condemnation of the guerrilla agenda, which is increasingly viewed by the population at large as a cause of violence and destruction, rather than a struggle for peace and prosperity.
- ♦ There is a recognition of the paradoxical nature of guerrilla philosophies and practices. While guerrillas "preach" societal progress, the "practice" more often produces more material results, such as money or power, for the key individuals involved.
- ♦ The cost/benefit analysis which a rational individual is said, by some political theorists, to perform in order to make a decision regarding participation in guerrilla activity is increasingly yielding a result that favors a more legitimate approach to achieving benefit. Once there is more to be gained, at less cost, through dialog rather than violence, the rational individual, in this case the rational Colombian, will choose to participate in national dialog and reconciliation.

- ♦ No explanation would be complete without referencing what may be the most influential event of recent history, the collapse of the Soviet Union. It may be that the psychological and sociological impact of this event is even more significant than the loss of operational support by the guerrillas.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

As shown in Chapter VIII, the majority of Colombians are against political violence, and are not likely to support any guerrilla movement. The guerrillas are aware of this situation, and they realize that their war will not result in a rise to power. What has continued to make this way of life so attractive is the economic incentives it offers. The profits available to individual members continue to be high, but where profit potential exists, the government has maintained ample pressure, thereby increasing the relative costs as well. There is a lesson to be learned from the past, however. When attempts at dialog have led to a general permissivity on the part of the government, the guerrillas have had sufficient breathing space to regroup and renew. The best course therefore involves a firmness with regard to guerrilla violence that is at least equal to the willingness to enter into dialog and reconciliation. The nation will no doubt continue to rely on the professionalism and dedication of its military in maintaining the internal stability and overall security of the country.

Continued reform will be necessary, and the dialog should never be discontinued, for these are the tools with which Colombia must pursue its continued development.

Lasting change will only be possible through a lasting institutions and institutional values.

C. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Again and again in the research, material was encountered that reflected a fascination with violence as a cultural phenomenon in Colombia. While this research effort was focused on political violence and its economic consequences, it would be appropriate for a study to be made of Colombian violence of all kinds. It would be useful to discuss at length whether the level of general violence in the country is greatly influenced by historical justifications of political violence by various parties and sides in conflict.

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